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TO THE CONGREGATION

WHOSE EARNEST AND STEADFAST ATTENTION

KINDLED THE PREACHER'S HEART

AND TONGUE

This Volume is Affectionately Inscribed

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I

THE NATURE AND PLACE OF FAITH IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

I

THE NATURE AND PLACE OF FAITH IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

"Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." —Heb. xi: 1.

We are living in an age of mental confusion. The world everywhere is torn up. There have been so many surprising discoveries, and so many startling inventions, and so many new combinations within the last fifty years, that we are all at sea. There are so many novel hypotheses and so many interpretations, there are so many books and so many voices giving directions which contradict one another, that the minds of many are hopelessly bewildered. This mental confusion is everywhere. It is impossible that the Christian church should escape it. The impression has gone abroad that Christianity is not what it used to be; that the Bible is not the book it was when we were young; that the old doctrines have been if not discredited at least seriously modified; that Jesus of Nazareth must be looked at from a different viewpoint; and that the Christian church is not

worthy of the veneration which was given to it by the fathers. This is the vague and general impression, and the average man has no time to find out whether the impression has good foundations or not. For we are living in one of the busiest of all ages. Men are obliged to work almost with desperation, and when their day's work is over it is necessary for them to play that they may keep the physical machine in working order. The busy physician bewails the fact that he gets almost no time to read, being scarcely able to keep up with his professional reading. The hurried lawyer sighs because he has so little time with his books. I heard a college president lamenting, not long ago, that he had scarcely any time to read. So crowded is our modern life, that the average man or woman is unable to pursue any systematic course of serious study. The result of it all is that there is a widespread ignorance of the foundations of our Christian faith, and the question arises, Where are people going to find the instruction which they need?

They cannot go to the daily papers, for the papers are gotten up in a hurry, and it is not their function to impart Christian doctrine to the world. Moreover, many papers are in the hands of men who are either indifferent to Christianity or hostile to it altogether; and whatever is said about the church in their columns is written, for the most part, by young and inexperienced reporters who

see Christianity simply from the outside, and know nothing of its fundamental doctrines. Shall we go to the novelist for this information? No. There is not a great novelist now writing who is a safe or satisfactory interpreter of the Christian faith. Mrs. Humphry Ward, Miss Marie Corelli, and Mr. Hall Caine have produced what are called religious novels, but neither of these three writers is competent to interpret Christianity to this generation. Shall we go, then, to the theological professors? No. They are immersed in the work of the class room; and the seminary and the people cannot easily be brought together.

If anybody is to interpret Christianity to the men and women of to-day, it must be the preacher; but even he is often tempted to feel that he has no time to do this foundation and all-important work. There are so many urgent duties to be pressed home upon the consciences of men, there are so many practical truths which need to be unfolded and illustrated, there are so many deserving enterprises to be held up and commended, that the average preacher seldom ventures to deal with those processes by means of which his own faith has been built up, and very rarely considers with his congregation the deep foundation stones on which the whole superstructure of the Christian church is built. Moreover, every preacher knows that in his congregation there are many persons who do not want a lecture on the-

ology. They come to church, worn and weary, and they want something which appeals to and satisfies the heart. A woman in high position said to me not long ago: "When I go to church I do not want to think. I get enough thinking to do through the week, and when I go to church I want to rest. All I want is some good music and a chance to be soothed by the atmosphere of the place of prayer." This woman in these words speaks for many. The minister who deals seriously with the great themes of Christian thought knows that many in his congregation will grow drowsy or impatient, and that some of them will go away feeling they have not received that immediate uplift which they need to carry them through the duties of another week. But there are others who crave and long for fuller instruction on the problems and mysteries of our Faith, and so I have decided to devote the Sunday mornings of a quarter of this year to the consideration of these lofty and difficult themes.

In my walking up and down the world I have found seven men: —

The first man is confused. He does not know what to think about religious matters. He has heard that there has been recent light from the monuments, but he does not know what the light is. He has seen in a head-line in some paper that something has been dug up somewhere, but he does not know where or what. He has heard that

there has been commotion in a Theological Seminary, but just what caused the commotion he does not know. He has read in a paper that a certain creed has been modified, but just why or to what extent he has not been able to ascertain. He has noticed in the paper that Dr. Blank has given up belief in a certain section of the creed. But the reason for all this he is not able to discover. He was brought up in a Christian household and has been standing on the outskirts of the Christian crowd, and he knows that something is going on at the centre, but just what it is he does not know.

The second man is a man with suspended judgment. He believes that there are two sides to every question, and that it is a man's business to consider carefully both sides. He knows there are arguments for Christianity and arguments against it, and he wants to consider both sets of arguments impartially. He sits down with a pair of scales in front of him and throws into one pan the arguments for Christianity and into the other pan the arguments against Christianity, and every man who has anything to say either for or against is certain to catch his ear, for it gives him a chance to put something else in one or the other pan of the scales. If you ask him to become a Christian, his reply is, "I want to think about it. There are two sides, you know." I have often marvelled at this man, for I have seen him when his hair had grown gray and with great furrows in his cheeks

chiselled by the years, and even with the shadow of death falling across his face, I have heard him saying, "There are two sides, you know."

The third man is the agnostic. He is the man who does not know and who is convinced that he cannot know. Religious matters are beyond him. They are beyond everybody. Such themes as God, and the soul, and immortality are not profitable. We cannot reach certainty in regard to any of these matters, and therefore it is the part of wisdom to give one's time and thought to other things. There are only two things of which the agnostic is absolutely certain. The first is that he cannot know anything religiously, and that you cannot know anything either.

The fourth man is the man who has been made a sceptic, as he thinks, by science. He is not a scientist himself, but has a smattering of what sundry scientists have written, and so far as he can see, Christianity and science are opposed to each other, and science has driven Christianity from the field. The Bible has been completely discredited, he thinks, by scientific discoveries, and the Christian church is a defunct institution. The Bible says that the world is six thousand years old — science says it is older. The Bible says the world was made in six days — science says it was not. The Bible says that on a certain occasion the sun stood still — science knows that it did not. The Bible says that the whale swallowed Jonah —

science says it could not. Therefore all the miracles of the Old Testament are so many myths, and the miracles of the New Testament are accretions of beautiful legends which have gathered around the life of a very good man who once lived in Galilee.

The fifth man is the man who has been made an eclectic by the study of literature. This man has not studied the Bible, but he has read a little poetry and a little philosophy, and has dipped a little into the science of comparative religion. He has gone just deep enough into Buddhism and Confucianism to know that there are some good things in those religions, and he has not gone deep enough to know how many bad things there are in them. This man is very cosmopolitan in his views and aspirations. He would not be so narrow as to be a Christian and pin his faith to the sleeve of any one religion. He believes in the good wherever it may be found. He would not accept any particular creed, but would take all creeds so far as they commend themselves to his good judgment. Tennyson has given us a portrait of this man in his "Palace of Art": —

> "I take possession of man's mind and deed;
> I care not what the sects may brawl;
> I sit as God holding no form of creed,
> But contemplating all."

I have often met that man.

The sixth man is exceedingly humble, so humble

that he is unwilling to become a Christian. He knows that Christianity is a big subject, and he knows also that he is busy and that his intellectual faculties are limited. He has neither the time nor the ability to investigate such a myriad-sided subject, and therefore he has convinced himself that he has no right to believe. "What right," he says, "has a man to say he believes in a thing which he has neither the time nor the disposition to investigate?" This man of humility is one of the most plausible of all men now alive.

The seventh man is a man whose heart is timid. He lives in a state of chronic alarm. He is afraid of the higher criticism, of the new theology, and of the new psychology, and of German philosophy, and of French speculation, and of scientific investigation, for he does not want the Ark of the Lord to be upset. He puts on a brave face, but in his heart he is afraid of thorough investigation, thinking that possibly if we only thought deeply enough, we might discover that some of the things we believe are not true. This would be quite disastrous to the church, because it would unsettle the minds of the young. This man thinks we had better let well enough alone and not bother ourselves by efforts to probe too deeply. He is a believer himself, so he thinks, he accepts all the doctrines, he is a member of the church — but why he believes the things which the church stands for, he does not know. He does not know why he believes in

the existence of God, or in the deity of Christ, or in the forgiveness of sins, or in the immortality of the soul. He is not able to give a reason for the hope that is in him. In the presence of the first six men who are always talking about their unbelief and giving good reasons for it, this man is silent. He is a Christian, but he is not well enough posted to defend himself when he meets men who are not Christians. It is to this man that I want to preach on the coming Sundays. I hope the other six men will be present. Please invite them to come, but the sermons are not for them. The sermons are for the man who, although a member of the church, does not really know what the foundations of the Christian faith are. In Mrs. Ward's famous novel, "Robert Elsmere," she represents a contest between Squire Wendover and the hero of the novel, Robert Elsmere. The Squire is not a believer in Christianity as the church teaches it. He has a very plausible, weighty way of saying things. He drops a few remarks against the miracles and claims of Jesus, and Robert Elsmere capitulates at once. He offers not a word of argument, he utters no protest, he simply surrenders. This picture of Mrs. Ward's incensed Mr. Gladstone. He thought it was ridiculous. According to Mrs. Ward's story there was no contest at all; it was a pæan on one side and a blank on the other. A great creed with eighteen centuries of Christian history behind it was not able

to utter a single articulate syllable in its defence. But Mrs. Ward was painting true to life when she painted that picture. Many a young man has gone down just as Robert Elsmere went down, without a word to say in defence of the faith which he had confessed. I have been dumfounded more than once by the silence of Christians when they have been caught in situations where they ought to have spoken. I have heard a man say with great assurance that the doctrine of the Trinity was never thought of until the fourth century, and the Christian man to whom it was said opened not his mouth. I have heard it asserted in the presence of Protestant people that the Roman Catholic Church is the mother church — and there was no protest. I have heard it said that men of science had given up believing in the miracles — and there was not a word of denial uttered. Certainly the church militant is never going to win victories until its members know how to defend themselves against the people who talk against Christ and his church.

With this much by way of introduction, let us now come to the subject for this morning: The nature and place of faith in the Christian life.

A hasty glance through the New Testament will convince one that faith is a matter of cardinal importance to anybody who would be a Christian. Jesus began his ministry by urging men to believe, and in the upper chamber on the last night of his

earthly life we find that the greatest word upon his lips is still that word "believe." He is pleading with them to believe in him. "You believe in God," he said, "believe also in me." "These things have I said that you may believe." He was always looking for faith. There was no question which he asked with such earnestness as the question, Do you believe? And wherever he found it he was delighted. There was nothing delighted him so much. "O woman, great is thy faith!" The words came from his lips like a shout of triumph. "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." With such a eulogy he crowned a Roman centurion. And the reason why faith delighted him was because it gave him an opportunity to do wonderful things. The greatest miracles, as the New Testament plainly declares, were preceded by acts of faith. Jesus is very careful to call attention to the fact that it is faith which has made his great works possible. How many times we read this expression, "And Jesus seeing their faith," and then the story goes on to tell us of some marvellous thing which he did. But if there was no mighty faith, there were no mighty works. One of the evangelists tells us that in a certain locality he could do no mighty work because of the people's unbelief. And so in his conversations with his disciples we find that Jesus comes back again and again to this fundamental subject. Now he reprimands them, "O ye of little faith!" Now

he chides them, "Where is your faith?" Or again, "How is it that you have no faith?" Again he encourages them, "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed," you shall be able to do things which the world calls impossible. This is the first thing, then, which Jesus of Nazareth looks for in a man. It was the first thing he looked for when he came to the earth nineteen hundred years ago, and it is the first thing which he will look for when he comes again. "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

Now all the New Testament writers follow Jesus in placing faith at the beginning of the Christian life. Paul seldom wrote about anything else. The word "faith" occurs again and again on every one of his pages. He takes up an expression in the Old Testament, "The just shall live by faith," and he makes that the key-note of his entire interpretation of Christianity. "By faith are you saved," so he writes to his converts. "We walk by faith, not by sight." Further quotation is unnecessary. According to the writer to the Hebrews everything great that had ever been done in Hebrew history was done by men of faith who were able to do it because of their faith. Peter also makes faith the foundation stone on which the whole temple of Christian character is to be built. "Add to your faith," he says, "virtue, and to your virtue knowledge," etc. Faith is the stone upon which all the other stones are to rest. At

the end of his gospel John tells us why he has written the things which he has just narrated. He says, "I have written these things that ye might believe." The supreme ambition of John's life was to develop in men's hearts this Christian faith. It is evident, therefore, if we are to make any progress in our study of the Christian religion, we must at the very start get a clean-cut conception of what faith is and how it works.

But before we come to our definition let us clear away two misapprehensions which have caused a deal of mischief. The New Testament never opposes faith to reason. The assumption that faith is one thing and reason another thing directly opposed to it has estranged many from the Christian church. Anything that goes contrary to reason is especially repugnant to young men. The men who have attacked Christianity with most effect have been men who have given the impression that Christianity crushes the reason. One of the causes of the marvellous influence of Thomas Paine's book, "The Age of Reason," was that he contrasts society when it is moved by principles of justice and liberty with the state of society as it existed when lazy, superstitious monks were supreme. He always confused faith with credulity and superstition and ignorance and vice. And if that is what faith is, who would not prefer the age of reason? So mighty was the effect of this book that at the beginning of the nineteenth century

there was scarcely a handful of Christian students in Yale University. "The Age of Reason" swept belief in Christianity out of the heads of thousands of the brightest young men of our republic. Later writers have written in such a manner as to create the same impression. Mr. Draper in his "Intellectual Development of Europe" always writes upon the supposition that an age of faith is an age of credulity and superstition. He exalts the reason and makes us feel that an age in which the intellect is given full sweep is immeasurably superior to an age when everybody is devout. But all this is fallacious. Where does the New Testament ever make reason the antithesis of faith? Faith is no more opposed to the reason than it is opposed to any other faculty of the mind. It is not opposed to memory, it is not opposed to imagination, it is not opposed to the æsthetic sense, nor is it opposed to the reason. We walk by faith, not *sight.* Sight is the antithesis of faith, but a man can walk by faith and reason just as he can walk by faith and memory or faith and imagination, or faith and the love for the beautiful. The most enlightened man in all the world can walk by faith. Indeed, all men who walk to any purpose walk not by sight but by faith.

Another misapprehension is that faith is something mysterious, which nobody can understand without a long course of special preparation. Of course we know what faith means when we use it

in ordinary speech; but, according to the idea of many, faith in the Bible sense is a very mysterious word indeed, so mysterious that hardly anybody can understand it. It has an occult and mystical and esoteric meaning which is well nigh indefinable. So many think, but their thought is mistaken. Faith is not mysterious at all. The word "faith" in the New Testament means precisely what it means everywhere else. Whenever you find a man who is trying to make out that faith is something mysterious, you may rest assured that he is befogged himself, and that he is certain to befog others. In the gospels faith means just what it means in Fifth Avenue or Tenth Avenue. Faith in Pauline epistles means just what it means in Wall Street. When I say, "I did not let that man have the money because I had no faith in him," when I say, "I would do anything for that man because I have lots of faith in him," everybody knows what I mean — and so everybody ought to know what Jesus means when he urges men to have faith.

Nor should we think that faith is something peculiar to religion. Faith is a principle which underlies all life. It is a principle by which all men live, if they live to any purpose. No man succeeds in this world who does not walk by faith. Every successful business man is a man of faith. He exercises faith every time he enters a new market, or throws on the market a new kind of goods, or puts his money into a new form of in-

vestment. He believes that a certain thing is good, and believing this he puts his money into it. And the more faith a man has, the more successful — other things being equal — he is likely to be. The men of our city who have made the greatest fortunes have been men who have had the largest capacity for believing. They saw New York big when New York was little. Ordinary men all around them walked by sight; they did not walk by sight, they walked by faith; and because they walked by faith God has given them great rewards. The biggest men in the world of commerce and of money to-day are the men who have shown the greatest measure of faith. A man sees that a certain region is going to be populous by and by; he runs a railroad through it. He refused to walk by sight. By faith he saw the population before it was in existence, and because he was willing to walk by faith all his descendants are rich. The men who saw America large long before it became large, the men who seized the natural resources and the instruments of production long before their neighbors had any idea that these things would some day be valuable, are the men who to-day sit on thrones ruling the tribes of our industrial and commercial worlds. No man can succeed in business unless he is a man of faith.

Nor can a man be a great scientist without faith. Scientists cannot walk by sight. The greatest scientist has the greatest imagination and the

greatest amount of enterprise. He sees a thing in his imagination before he sees it in the laboratory. By seeing it first with his imagination he is able to get it into his laboratory later on. The only reason why science is making such tremendous strides in these recent times is because science has learned to walk by faith. All our inventions are the rewards which God has given to men of faith. Men believed that a certain thing could be done, and their belief gave them the power to do it. Columbus believed that he could cross the ocean, and believing thus he did it. Let us then get rid of the idea that Christianity is a little field with a high hedge around it, and that as soon as one leaves the world and gets inside the hedge, all his familiar words lose their old meanings, and all the principles by which life is lived must be changed. Christianity uses precisely the words which are used in the streets, and she uses them with precisely the same signification. Christianity is simply the principle of life. A man who makes a successful business man makes a successful Christian, because he has already mastered the alphabet of the high art of living. All the great deeds in the moral history of the race, just as all the great works in the world of commerce, have been done by men of colossal faith. In one sense, then, there is no such thing as unbelief. Everybody is in some sense a believer, and every person, no matter who he is, walks by faith.

As Edward Bulwer Lytton says: —

"There is no unbelief;
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod
And waits to see it push away the clod,
He trusts in God.

"Whoever says when clouds are in the sky,
Be patient, heart, light breaketh by and by,
Trusts the Most High.

"Whoever sees, 'neath field of winter snow,
The silent harvest of the future grow,
God's power must know.

"Whoever lies down on his couch to sleep,
Content to lock each sense in slumber deep,
Knows God will keep.

"Whoever says, To-morrow, The Unknown,
The Future, trusts that power alone,
He dares disown.

"There is no unbelief;
And day by day and night, unconsciously,
The heart lives by that faith the lips deny,
God knoweth why."

Having dealt with these misapprehensions, now let us consider two serious objections which have been urged against the New Testament teaching concerning faith. The New Testament, as everybody knows, makes belief a voluntary act. We are commanded to believe. If we do not believe, we are condemned. And this is all wrong — so many a man has said — because belief is involuntary and cannot be commanded. The proof must be forth-

coming, and when the proof is at hand, then belief becomes inevitable. But belief not being under the control of the will cannot be produced by order. That was the objection which the English poet Shelley brought against the New Testament. It disgusted him with it at once. He thought that the religion which demanded anything so unreasonable could not be divine, and so he put Christianity into his waste basket along with other things which he did not want.

What is the faith which the church demands? what is the faith for which the New Testament pleads? Fortunately for us we have a definition of it in the first verse of the eleventh chapter of the letter to the Hebrews: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for." Or, as you will see by consulting the margin of your Revised Bible, it is the "giving substance to things hoped for." Christian faith is belief in Jesus Christ. To believe in him is to hope that he is able to do what he says he can do. He says he can save men from their sins. He says that men can follow him and become like him.

And now the question is, Can a man hope to become like him? Can a man hope to have the mind that was also in him? Can a man hope to have his spirit, his disposition, his temper? Can a man hope to live a reverent, filial, godly life? Of course he can thus hope! If he does not hope it, it is because he is morally rotten and has lost the

power of aspiration. If he does not hope it, it is because he loves darkness rather than light, and the reason he does that is because his works are evil. A man who will not hope to be a good man is a man who is self-condemned. And if it is possible for every man to hope to become like Christ, it is also possible for every man in less or fuller measure to give substance to the thing that he hopes for. He can begin at once to act in such a way as to realize his hopes. He can by energetic action build into his life the pattern shown. Faith, then, contains two elements: first, the element of hope, and secondly, the element of energetic action —and both these elements are under the control of the human will. We can hope, and we can, with greater or less success, give substance to our hopes. And every man who hopes and gives substance to his hope is a man of faith.

But there is another objection still more plausible. Is not Christianity unreasonable in demanding belief at the start? Should it not furnish conclusive proof, and then ask us to believe? No, it cannot do that. If it should do so, it would go contrary to life as we know it in every other department. In every field of human activity belief comes first and proof comes second. Certainly it is that way in the world of business. A man believes that a certain market is good, and enters it. If he did not believe it, he would not enter it. If he waits until other people enter it and prove that

it is good, he has lost his opportunity. A man believes that a certain enterprise is good, he goes into it and makes a fortune. If he waits until the enterprise succeeds in the hands of some other man, he is out and the other man is in. If I say to a piece of real estate: "O real estate, please tell me, will you advance in value a hundred per cent within the next ten years? If you will give me conclusive proof, then I will buy you," — and the real estate answers not a word, for it considers me a fool. If I do not buy the real estate until it is plainly proved that its value will double within ten years, I shall never have a chance to buy it at all.

And as it is in the business world, so it is in the world of science. Science never waits for proof. She always starts out with what she calls an hypothesis. She supposes something, she takes something for granted, and taking something for granted she proceeds to walk out in search of proof. She makes her observations of the material universe, and sets up what she is pleased to call the nebular hypothesis. It is only an assumption, but having assumed this she goes to work to experiment and investigate and observe, and the result of it all is she gets so many evidences of the correctness of this hypothesis that she settles down upon it as something proved. Fifty years ago somebody came along with the evolutionary hypothesis. It is an assumption. Haeckel of Germany admits that it is not yet proved, but

asserts that it is going to be proved. Scientists at present are making observations, collecting data; the proof will be forthcoming later on. And so it is in the world of invention. Fulton believed that a steamship could go up the Hudson to Albany. The belief came first, the sailing of the boat came second. Morse believed that he could send dots and dashes through a wire. The belief was first, the telegram second. Bell believed that he could send voice vibrations through a wire. The belief was first, the telephonic message second. Marconi believed that he could speak across the Atlantic without an intervening wire. He did it. The belief was first, and the message was second. You never can get a great good before a belief, but always after it. Belief is the condition of great and noble deeds.

Now the principle upon which men act in the world of business and science and invention is precisely the principle on which Jesus says that all men ought to act in the realm of religion. Believe — that is the point at which we are to begin. If we will believe, then all things become possible. Let us take Christ as our hypothesis. Let us suppose that he will save us. Let us hope that he is divine. Let us make this venture. Let us take this risk. We cannot have the proof at first, but let us act upon the hypothesis, and then begin to gather evidence, making observations, experimenting from week to week. The proof

will be forthcoming later on. Would you believe in prayer? Take it for granted that prayer is beneficial and then experiment, — that is scientific. Would you believe that Christ is divine? Assume that he is, and then experiment by trusting him, doing the things he says you ought to do, — the proof will be abundant later on. The New Testament is not asking of us an unreasonable thing when it tells us first of all to believe.

Well may we all exclaim, then, in the words of one of old, "Lord, we believe; help thou our unbelief." It is our lack of faith which is the root of all our religious troubles. We have not enterprise enough, we do not trust sufficiently to the grace and power of God. What are you hoping? Faith is giving substance to the things you hope for. What do you hope for? Do you hope that you will be a better, stronger man? Then give substance to your hope, and in this way prove that you are a man of faith indeed. Do we hope that our church within the next ten years will double its membership and quadruple its power? Then let us give substance to our hope and prove that we are men and women worthy to be enrolled with the heroes and heroines of the eleventh chapter of the letter to the Hebrews. Do you hope that the six men of whom I have spoken will be here next Sunday morning? Then give substance to your faith, and they will be here.

II

THE NATURE AND PLACE OF REASON IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

II

THE NATURE AND PLACE OF REASON IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord."
— Isaiah i : 18.

The Christian religion claims the entire man for God. No faculty or power of his nature is neglected or overlooked. This is made clear in Jesus' definition of the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Every province of the kingdom of man's nature is taken in. And in order to make this so clear that no one can possibly mistake it, he uses the great adjective "all" four times. It is *all* thy soul and *all* thy heart and *all* thy mind and *all* thy strength. There is to be no outlying district of any one of the various provinces which is to be allowed to remain foreign to the king. Paul follows the Master very closely in this teaching. He too says that the entire man has been redeemed and belongs to God. When he wished great things for his churches it was his habit to link three words together, — spirit, soul, and

body. Both the visible and invisible parts of a man come within the scope of redemption. We find Paul again and again insisting upon it that the body is to obey the law of Christ. The heathen world was ready to allow the mind to come in, but many of the pagan converts preferred to allow their bodies to stand outside the temple door. It was because of this tendency to divorce religion from morality that Paul uses such an exhortation as, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." And all of the apostolic writers are insistent upon the right of the intellect to a place in the Christian life. Peter says to his converts, "Be ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you." He himself had been challenged by a hostile world and had been obliged to state the evidence upon which his Christian faith was built, and he realized that every professing Christian must face a world that is ready to attack him, and that a Christian is helpless if he does not know how to give an answer to the man who opposes his faith. It is because of this that the apostle gives knowledge such an important place in the Christian character. "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge." Paul gives the same advice to his converts throughout Asia Minor. In writing to the Colossians he says, "Let your

speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." A Christian who does not know how to answer the man who opposes his religion, is to a large extent impotent and useless in the great work which God has given him to do. In Paul's very first letter he lays down a principle of the greatest significance. "Test all things, hold fast that which is good." The word "test" he took from the world of banking. Bankers subjected every doubtful coin that came into their possession to a test, in order to see whether it was genuine or counterfeit. Paul would carry the same habit of scrutiny into the field of religion. We are to use all the faculties we have. Nothing is to be received until it has been tested. We are to throw away the false and hold fast that which is good. And with Peter and Paul John agrees. In his first letter he says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." The writers of the New Testament everywhere assume that a man is not going to become a Christian without using his mind, and that he cannot remain a Christian unless he builds his life upon foundations which the reason approves.

But notwithstanding the explicit teaching of the New Testament, the impression has gotten abroad that faith and reason are opposed to each other, that both cannot flourish in the same man at the

same time, that if a man wants to be a man of faith, he must not think deeply, and that if he gives free rein to his reason, it is likely to go hard with his faith. In many a circle it is taken for granted that if a man becomes a Christian, he must allow his mind to be shackled, and that if he wishes to think freely and follow the truth whithersoever it may lead him, he had better not attach himself to the church.

Now a more mischievous impression could not possibly get abroad. Joseph Glanvill, near the middle of the seventeenth century wrote this: "There is not anything that I know which hath done more mischief to religion than the disparaging of reason, for hereby the very foundations of Christian faith have been undermined. If reason must not be heard, the being of God and the authority of Scripture can neither be proved nor defended; and so our faith drops to the ground like a house that hath no foundation." If that was true in the seventeenth century, it is doubly true nowadays, for the entire world is using its intellect as never before. Never has the human mind been so alert and so active since the days of the Reformation as it is to-day. Everywhere men are investigating, sifting, searching, digging. It is an age of analysis, an age of discovery. Everything is held out under the searching light of reason. Everything is plucked up by the roots, in order that the roots may be studied. No part of God's universe is counted

too sacred to be invaded by the mind. The barriers of the heavens have been broken down, and men have gone with their instruments to the outmost rim of stars. Men have brought up, by means of the microscope, a universe which God had hidden out of sight. Our age is acting upon the assumption that the human mind has a right to know, and in order to know, it is its privilege to investigate, to argue, and to go to the bottom.

If in such an age as this the Christian church should lay its hand upon the Bible, and say, "Hush, you must not pry into this. This is God's book. It must not be analyzed;" if the Christian church should say to men and women who come to it with their perplexities: "The mysteries of our faith are all tied up and laid away. They must not be disturbed," then the Christian church would abdicate her high position and would forfeit her right to be called the teacher of the truth. And it is young men especially who are most likely to be hurt by any such false impression, for the mind is never so ambitious and so intensely active as it is in men between sixteen and thirty years of age. It is in those years that the mind is ready to dare all things and to go anywhere, and if young men get the idea that the church has written over her door, "All intellectual freedom abandon, ye who enter here," they will quietly pass on and enter some other door. And they ought to!

How did this impression ever get abroad? Nothing ever comes into existence without a reason, and it is worth our while to find out just how this mischievous idea got afloat. Undoubtedly the action of the mediæval church is in part responsible for it, for the mediæval church was afraid of reason, and did not hesitate to say so through the mouths of many of her very greatest teachers. In the Middle Ages the Christian church became afraid of reason, and this fear was not so senseless as we often think. There were causes for it. In those dark times the church was on a rough and dangerous sea. Life was all chaotic. Wild and barbarous peoples were just beginning to learn to live the new and higher life. A terrific storm was sweeping across the world, and in such troubled times it seemed much safer to hold tight to the decisions of the early councils rather than to trust the church to the thinking of men who were then alive. We can never deal fairly with the mediæval church unless we remember the conditions in the midst of which it found itself. The position which it took seemed plausible and reasonable to the wisest and the greatest of its leaders. Around the Bible it planted a thick and heavy hedge — the hedge of tradition. The Bible must be interpreted, it said, by this tradition. The Bible must be supplemented also by this tradition. No man must interpret the Bible in such a way as to contradict tradition, and no one must dare to interpret either

the Bible or tradition, said the mediæval church, but priests. A distinguished writer of the fifteenth century lays down this surprising proposition — it represents the feeling of his time: "There are two books: the book of nature and the book of scripture. The first book is open to everybody, the second book is open to priests alone." In an age of ignorance it became common for men to pride themselves upon believing things that were incredible. Even so great a man as Lord Bacon is reported to have said, "The more incredible anything is, the more honor I do God in believing it." This is the principle upon which many mediæval Christians acted. There was nothing too preposterous or too incredible for them to accept. Long after the Middle Ages had ended there was a distinguished man who said, "By my faith I am a Christian, by my reason I am a heathen."

And this mediæval temper has come down to the present time. It is found very often, even among Protestants. There are professing Christians in all parts of the country who are secretly afraid of reason. They do not like to think themselves, they see no necessity for thinking, they feel that if a man thinks about the doctrines of his faith he is almost certain to become a heretic. The man who thinks is to them what Cassius was to Julius Cæsar. "Yon Cassius has a lean and hungry look, he thinks too much." They prefer men who are sleek and fat. They make religion

merely a sentimental and emotional thing; they put no thought into it. They speak of doctrines as something quite superfluous. They take no interest in doctrines, and as for a dogma, it is nothing but a cur to be kicked about the streets. And as for theology, that is something to be steadily eschewed. Theology instead of being what it is, the greatest of the sciences, is to them only a foolish piece of stupid speculation. It is just such Christians as these who perpetuate the impression that Christianity has nothing to do with the reason, but moves entirely in the realm of the emotions.

And then no doubt the use of certain words has had not a little to do with deepening this impression. An infidel is usually known as a "free thinker." The first man who rejected Christianity and then called himself a "free thinker" builded better than he knew. That epithet was a telling stroke of genius. The word itself contains an argument against the Christian religion. If a man who rejects Christianity is a free thinker, the implication is that a man who accepts it is a bound thinker, — a man whose reason is in chains. But the implication is not fair. A Christian has a right to think just as freely as any other man. All Christians, if they avail themselves of their privileges, are free thinkers. I studied pedagogy first, and then law, and then theology. I was first a teacher, and then a lawyer, and then a preacher.

But I never thought any more freely when I was a teacher or a lawyer than I have thought since I became a preacher. A Christian puts no shackles on his mind. He is not a good Christian unless he allows his mind perfect freedom. Our conclusions are vitiated if we reach them by mental processes which have been forced. If a sceptic says, "I am a free thinker," then I will answer him, "So am I!" Mischief has also been caused by the use of the word "liberal" before "Christian." If a man cuts out the best part of the New Testament, he immediately calls himself a liberal Christian. The implication is that a man who accepts the New Testament as it is must be illiberal. The implication is unfair. I accept the New Testament from the first page to the last, and I will not allow any man to insinuate in my presence that I am not a liberal Christian. It is the duty of all Christians to be liberal, to welcome all truth with open mind and generous heart.

The use of the word "rationalist" has also been misleading. The word came into common use in the sixteenth century to designate the class of people who gave an exalted place to reason, and the word was seized upon by certain infidel philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who became known throughout the world as Rationalists. The word carries with it the implication that a man who accepts Christianity is an irrationalist; that is, he does not use his reason. If a

man reasons, he rejects Christianity; if he refuses to reason, he accepts it. The insinuation is unjust. All Christians are rationalists, or ought to be, in the sense that they make a vigorous use of their mind. The Christian religion is a rational religion, and the evidences for it are rational. It addresses itself primarily to the reason.

Now let us face certain facts. The only way to dissipate erroneous impressions is to throw upon them the light of indisputable facts.

The reason is one of the constituent faculties of the human mind. It is one of God's greatest gifts to man. He gave it to man that man might use it for his glory and for the welfare of the race. The reason, as well as all other faculties of the mind, is redeemed by Jesus Christ; and what God hath cleansed let no man call unclean, or reject. Man's reason is the judge who sits on the bench. It is by means of the reason that we detect falsehood, that we are able to distinguish the right from the wrong. Which is true, theism or pantheism? The reason must judge. Is Christ human or divine? There are arguments for each side, and the reason must weigh them. Is Protestantism or Catholicism best? How can we tell, if reason does not speak? No religion can be acceptable permanently that does not allow the Chief Justice to sit in the place appointed him by God.

Christianity demands the use of the reason. The gospel according to Isaiah is, "Come, let us

reason together." It is God that utters the words. According to Isaiah, God's arraignment of the Israelitish people is based on the fact that those people are not thinking enough. His lamentation runs: "Israel doth not know. My people doth not consider." They were going through their ceremonies and offering their sacrifices, singing their songs, and saying their prayers, but they were not thinking. God calls upon them to repent, and says to them, "Come now, and let us reason together." The Jewish canon of Scripture was built up by men who made free use of their reason. The prophets of Israel all spoke a message that was distasteful to the ambition and the wishes of their generation. Not one of the prophets had in his own lifetime any considerable influence. The prophets spoke their message, but Israel went steadily down to the abyss. Prophets thundered and wept, but Judah fell. It was not until after the captivity that the Jewish nation began to see that what the prophets had spoken was true. It was then that they saw for the first time that the prophetic interpretation was God's interpretation, and the prophetic condemnation was the condemnation of heaven. It was because it became clear to men's reason that Amos and Isaiah and the rest of them had uttered things that were true, that the prophets were canonized and seated on thrones and given the right to judge the tribes of Israel. If men had not exercised their reason, we should never

have had any Old Testament. The New Testament was built up in precisely the same way. As the years went on and it became increasingly clear that Jesus of Nazareth had indeed expressed the message of heaven, when the things which he predicted came to pass and the principles which he enunciated were discovered to be mightier than the principles upon which the pagan world had been built, it was then that men, by the exercise of their reason, began to place the writings of the New Testament on a level with the writings of the Old Testament prophets. But it was not done until the experience of history had made it clear to the reason that in these writings God had indeed spoken to men.

The Bible can never escape from the reason. If at any time in the future any book of the sixty-six books that make up the big book should become offensive to the enlightened reason of the church, it would simply be cast out. No Bible, book, or Christian doctrine will be carried along permanently which is offensive to the highest reason of Christian men. Christianity, we claim, is the truth, and truth appeals to the reason. According to some scholars, the opening lines of St. John's gospel ought to be: In the beginning was the reason, and the reason was with God, and the reason was God. If Christ is the reason, and if he is the light that lights every man that comes into the world, then our reason is something like his, and

while it may err, and does err, in the days of its immaturity, it is certain by and by to arrive at conclusions which are the same as his. There can be no permanent estrangement between reason and Christ.

The third fact to be borne in mind is that the mediæval church is not the church of to-day. Many persons constantly attack Christianity as though the church of our time was precisely like the church of five hundred years ago. Think of what physicians thought and did only a hundred years ago. I do not find people taunting the physicians of to-day and making fun of them because of certain errors physicians were guilty of a century ago. Why should the Christian church be everlastingly derided and opposed because of mistaken notions of men who have been in their graves hundreds of years? It is the Protestant church which is leading the world to-day, and the Protestant church from the very beginning has given to reason its rights. Modern history began in the year 1521 when an Augustinian monk by the name of Martin Luther went to the Diet of Worms to give an account of himself to the Emperor of Germany. The appearance of Luther before the emperor is a picture that ought to be burned into the retina of the eyes of every young man in America. It is April, and evening has come. The torches have been lighted, and they cast a flickering glare over the faces of the earnest men who have come

together to hear this monk from Wittenberg. As Luther goes through the door, the greatest general of Germany taps him on the shoulder and says, "My poor monk, my poor monk, you are on the way to make such a stand as I have never made in my toughest battle." And what the general said was true. The emperor is there, the electors, and the princes of Germany are there. In front of the king there is a table on which are piled books which this Augustinian monk has written. Luther is now thirty-eight years old. For over fifteen years he has been a monk. The fundamental principles of the Roman Catholic Church have been built into his mind. But as a student he has learned that church councils can make mistakes. He has said so, and has said so openly. The question before the Diet of Worms is: Will this Augustinian monk recant? The emperor tells him haughtily that he is not there to question matters which have been settled in general councils long ago, and that what he wants is a plain answer without horns, whether he will retract what he has said contradicting the decisions of the Council of Constance. Luther rises to reply, and this is what he says: "Since your imperial Majesty requires a plain answer, I will give one without horns or hoofs. It is this, that I must be convinced either by the testimony of Scripture or by clear argument. I cannot trust the pope or councils by themselves, for both have erred. I cannot and will not retract."

An awful silence falls upon them all. And then the Augustinian monk continues: "I can do nothing else. Here I stand. So help me God. Amen."

And as Luther passed out the door some Spaniards who were present hissed him. Spain was at that time the leading nation of the world, and God heard those hisses, and he laid his hand on Spain and led her slowly to the rear of the procession of European nations, and there he has held her for two hundred years. And God laid hold of Germany, at that time one of the most belated of all European nations, and told her to go up higher, and she to-day stands in the forefront of all the nations of the continent of Europe, because she followed Luther. "I must be convinced by clear argument." That was the position of Luther, and that is the position of Protestantism whenever it is true to itself. When you hear men then criticise the Christian church, and speak of it as though nothing had happened since Luther's day, remind them that the Diet of Worms was held three hundred and eighty-two years ago.

And it ought to be further understood that the members of the Christian church to-day who depreciate doctrine and dogma, and who sneer at theology, are not the creditable representatives of the Christian faith. Young people say sometimes quite enthusiastically: "Oh, come on, and let us do a lot of good. What do we care for the doctrines!" And off they go quite jauntily. But, alas! their

enthusiasm has all evaporated before the sun reaches noon. The only men and women who are able to bear the burden and the heat of the day, and who are found at their work when the sun goes down, are the men and women whose Christian faith is rooted and grounded in reason. And if Isaiah were alive to-day, the accusation which he would make against large sections of the church is the accusation which he made against the people of his day: "You do not know. You do not consider. You say your prayers, you sing your hymns, but you do not think." And because we do not think deeply, soberly, and in the fear of God, the Christian church is a maimed and crippled thing, and fails to do the mighty work which has been given it to do.

But while the human reason has a lofty place in the council chamber of the faculties of the soul, we should bear in mind that it has its limitations, and that what passes for reason with many men is often something else.

The word "reason" is commonly used loosely. What men sometimes call reason is nothing but opinion. A certain man asserts in my presence that the narrative of the virgin birth is contrary to reason. He says it very blandly and with great assurance. But I remind him that a distinguished professor of philosophy, who has one of the finest and keenest minds in America, says that the story is not contrary to his reason. Nor is it

contrary to the reason of ten thousand men who read it and believe it and feel it to be altogether reasonable. It is not correct then for you, my friend, to say that that story is contrary to human reason. What you mean to say is that it is contrary to *your* reason; and that, you know, is another thing. But are you sure that it is really contrary to your reason? What you are probably trying to say is that it is contrary to your opinion.

But opinion is one thing, and human reason is another. Opinion is the product of a man's reading and thinking and hearing. What a man thinks on any subject depends on what he has heard and read and thought. It is for this cause that one's opinions change from year to year. We hold a certain opinion, and then we read more widely, or live more deeply, and our opinion changes. When you are saying, therefore, that the story of Christ's birth is contrary to your opinion, you are not saying anything of great significance, for your opinion might change after more extensive reading or after a little deeper thinking. I travel into Alaska and meet an Eskimo who has never heard of the X-rays, and I say to him: "I have seen every bone in that hand of mine. I know the size and shape and exact location of every bone just as clearly as I should know all this if the flesh were scraped away." And he looks at me with surprise and says, "That is contrary to reason." What the man is trying to say is that it is contrary to his

opinion. We should not expect an Eskimo to use language accurately; we might expect it, however, of a New Yorker. Or I travel into the South Seas and I meet a man there who has never so much as heard of ice, and I say, "My southern friend, I walked across a lake one day in February and never even got my feet wet." And he throws up his hands in amazement, and says, "That is contrary to reason." What he is trying to say is that it is contrary to his experience. When the evangelist tells me that Jesus walked across a Palestinian lake in April, I have no right to say that is contrary to my reason. It is contrary to my experience. But my experience is rather a diminutive affair. If I am to cut down Christianity to the dimensions of my experience, I shall not have anything left of surpassing value. The fact is, Christ transcends my experience at every point. What he said runs as far beyond me as what he did. "I do always those things that are pleasing unto him." That is farther beyond me than walking on the water. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." I never could say a thing like that.

Moreover, a man is not all intellect. There is something in us more than reason. We have instincts as well as reason. We see things and feel things instinctively. One might feel the presence of a cat in a dark room, although the cat were absolutely still. Many a person has been able to feel the presence of a burglar, although even the

breathing of the burglar was not audible. We know many things which have never been reached by reason. We have what is called an intuitive faculty — we see things. How do I know that two and two do not make five? I see that they make four. I never reached that conclusion by reason. How do I know that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points? That truth was never reached by reason. There is more in me than intellect. I often watch the divine artist paint a sunset, and sometimes when he puts on the colors in unusually gorgeous ways, I get into a glow. It is not my reason that is at work. I am not reasoning about the sunset. The psychologist tells me that I have an æsthetic sense, and I suppose I have. At any rate, I know that I can appreciate a sunset without the aid of reason. And then we have an emotional nature — a nature that has its tastes and affections, its hungerings and its aspirations.

This part of us is certainly as important as the so-called intellectual. It was at this point that Thomas Huxley and John Fiske were obliged to part company. Both men were great men, but Fiske had the richer nature. There was more of Fiske than there was of Huxley. You who have read the Life of Huxley by his son, know that his mental limitations were serious. His prejudices were numerous and solid. His mind moved within narrow limits, but it moved powerfully in the direction of the work which God had given him to do. Huxley

asserted that there is but one kind of knowledge; which is not so. And he maintained that there is only one kind of evidence; and this also is erroneous. Fiske would not follow him in this. Fiske was inclined to ask him in the words of Tennyson: —

> "Who forged that other influence,
> That heat of inward evidence,
> That makes one doubt against the sense?"

Fiske took into account the great world within as well as the great world without. Oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen are to be considered; but so also are the affections, the aspirations, the demands of the soul. These are facts just as truly as are the facts of the material world. Such a man as Fiske could say with Tennyson: —

> "If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
> I heard a voice 'believe no more,'
> And heard an ever breaking shore
> That tumbled in the Godless deep;
>
> "A warmth within the breast would melt
> The freezing reason's colder part,
> And like a man in wrath the heart
> Stood up and answered, 'I have felt.'"

Now the feeling part of our nature is just as reliable as the arguing part, for both have been given to us by God, and the testimony of each must be taken in order to secure the complete message of the soul.

Moreover, the sphere in which reason works is limited. For instance, reason never discovers anything. It works over material furnished us by the senses and by the imagination. Scientists do not discover things by their reason. They do their greatest work by intuition, by guessing, hoping, dreaming, anticipating. Moreover, reason cannot walk in any region through which experience has not travelled. Take such a simple path as that which leads from ice to water, or from water to steam. No man that God ever made could reason his way from a lump of ice to a cup of water until experience had pointed out the way. Nor could any man reason his way from a cup of water to a cloud of steam unless experience had gone before him. And so the great things in religion are not reached by the reason. They are reached by other faculties of the mind. As the Old Testament puts it: "Canst thou by searching find out God?" No. "Be still and know that I am God." Reason then is not the avenue to religious knowledge. The knowledge comes to the heart that is humble. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Christ never reached this truth by argument. Nor does any other man reach the great truths of life by means of his reason. We learn the best things by loving, by suffering. Or,

in other words, by deep living. Goethe, in many ways, was a pagan, but it was he who wrote: —

> "Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
> Who never spent the midnight hours
> Weeping and watching for the morrow;
> He knows you not, ye unseen powers."

And so people as a rule become Christians not by listening to arguments, but by loving. A man has a child in whom his heart is bound up, and the child dies. The man is crushed, and throws himself back on God, and things become credible that seemed incredible before. He has climbed, not by argument, but by bleeding. A woman cares nothing for religion, she is interested in books and art. So long as her husband lives, her life seems to be complete, but by and by he dies. The art and the books have lost their fascination, and she throws herself upon God, and he lifts her out of her distress. She has reached Christianity not by reasoning, but by loving. And as it is not possible for reason to conduct us into the religious life, so it is impossible for reason to keep us there. No one can think too much, provided he keeps his work proportionate to his thinking. If a man thinks and does not work, he is as foolish as the man who eats and does not exercise. Eating is good. It has its place. It is essential. But if a man does nothing but eat, he will need the doctor shortly and the undertaker later on. And so it is with a Christian. If he does nothing but think,

and refuses to work, his mind becomes diseased, his heart becomes atrophied, he becomes spiritually dead. Reason has its place, but reason is not everything.

Everybody ought to act reasonably. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to become Christians, because this is your reasonable service. Often the very men who make the loudest professions of acting reasonably have the very least reason in their action. I try to convince a certain man that the sunset is beautiful. I say: "Oh, look at it! Could anything be more glorious!" And he stands with his back to the sunset and will not look at it. He says: "I do not believe what you say. Prove it to me." And I say, "Turn round and look." He says, "I won't." Is he reasonable? I endeavor to persuade another man that Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is great. The orchestra is playing, the instruments are sweeping through the allegro, and I say to this man: "Wagner was right. Instruments cannot carry music higher than that. If music is to travel any farther, it must be by means of the human voice. Is not that fine?" And the man puts his fingers in his ears, and says: "I do not believe what you say. Prove it to me." And I say, "Listen!" and he says, "I won't." Is he reasonable? I endeavor to persuade another man that a violet is fragrant. I say to him: "This odor is so delicate. Just smell it!" But the man has his fingers on the sides of his nose. He says:

"I won't. Prove it to me." I say, "Will you smell it?" He says, "No." Is he reasonable? I endeavor to persuade another man that sugar is sweet. I say, "This sugar is sweet. I have eaten a piece just like this." He says, "I do not believe it." I say to him, "Taste it." He says, "I won't." Is he reasonable? I endeavor to persuade another man that a cube of gold is heavier than a cube of iron. Both are of the same size. I say to him, "Take the gold in one hand and the iron in the other, and you will see." And he says, "I won't." Is he reasonable? I endeavor to persuade another man to become a Christian. I say to him, "Jesus Christ is sufficient for every need of the soul," and he says, "I do not believe it." I say to him, "Try him!" And he says, "I won't." Is he reasonable?

III

THE CAUSE OF THE PRESENT UNEASINESS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

III

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"Can ye not discern the signs of the times?"
— Matthew xvi: 3.

THAT is a question in which there is the sting of a rebuke. It is one of the most caustic and audacious of our Lord's questions. He addressed it to men of great intelligence and wide influence, men who were high up in the pictures of their day, men who held the foremost positions in the church and sat in the chief seats at the feasts. These men were experts in interpreting the signs of the weather. The Jews paid more attention to the weather than we do, because they had no weather bureau to look after it. These men could stand in the streets of Jerusalem and from the direction which the smoke took on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles could predict the amount of rainfall for the coming year. When they saw the sun slip down into the Mediterranean, leaving behind him a sky that was glorious, they said, "Good weather to-morrow!" And when the sun arose above the Mount of Olives through a sky that looked like the

face of a man who was angry, they said, "Bad weather to-day!" And Jesus is ready to acknowledge that in all such matters these men are experts. "You know," he said, "how to read the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times? You know how to interpret the forms of mist that float between your eyes and the sun, but do you not know how to read the forces by whose action a new world is about to be created?" Wonderful things had happened. Judah had fallen from her high place under the heel of Rome. The nation was politically dependent, morally degraded, spiritually dead. John the Baptist had come out of the desert with his flaming message. There was a ferment in men's hearts everywhere. A prophet of Nazareth has been doing wonderful deeds, and saying things more marvellous than his deeds. And yet not a man in all this crowd realizes that a crisis of human history is at hand. Every man of them is as blind as a bat at noon. They know how to discuss weather, but they cannot read the mighty movements of the mind of God.

This question is of perennial significance because the ditch into which the Pharisees fell is always open, and people of reputation have a fatal facility for falling into it. We ourselves are quite expert in discussing the weather. There are all sorts of weather, — political, social, commercial. And we are adepts in predicting what the weather is going to be. We say with great assurance, "Times

will be prosperous through this coming year." We look over the political field and say with bland assurance, "He stands no chance of a reëlection." We know how to read the face of the sky, but do we know how to interpret the pulsations of the oceanic current by which the world is being borne onward to its predestined goal? We have our tittle-tattle and our gossip and our conversation spiced with learning, we read our newspapers which are so many cakes of foam blown in from the ruffled surface of the sea that is tossed by many winds; but are we able to tell what God has been doing with the world, and what he is going to do with it in the years that are just ahead of us?

Among the signs of the times which every thoughtful man ought to observe are the titles of books. It is not necessary to read books in order to know which way the wind is blowing, a glance at their titles is sufficient. Let us look at the titles of just a few books which have been published within the last ten years. One of the greatest of Russians has written a volume which is entitled, "What is Religion?" The most renowned of all living German professors has written a book which is being read by Americans to-day, and the title of it is, "What is Christianity?" One of the brainiest of all living Scotchmen has written a volume entitled, "Can the Old Faith Live with the New?" Crossing the Atlantic we find books bearing titles equally suggestive. A college

president writes a book entitled: "Shall We Believe in Divine Providence?" A professor in a theological seminary writes a volume with the title, "Can I Believe in God the Father?" Another theological professor writes a volume with the title, "Reconstruction in Theology." From New England there comes a book, "Old Faiths in New Light." And from the West there comes a book entitled: "What is Left of the Old Doctrines?"

Evidently something has happened. When Christian men around the world write books whose titles are interrogation points, it is safe to say that something has taken place. What is it? Everybody ought to know. It is the duty of every professing Christian to know. He ought to see very clearly what it is that has happened, else his Christian life will be bound in shallows and in miseries. The Christian life ought to be a life of peace; but how can a man's heart be at peace if he knows that something tremendous has happened, but does not know the nature of the event. When you are awakened at night by a slight sound, you are not at all disturbed if you know what the sound is. It may be the dripping of water from one of the faucets, it may be the teeth of a mouse in the wall, it may be the wind toying with one of the blinds; no matter what the noise is, it is not disturbing if you know what it is. It may be that it is the crackling of flames — in that case you know what to do. But if you cannot tell what it is that

is causing the noise, you are both impotent and wretched, and sleep becomes impossible. The boy who travels down the hall stairs in the dark and sees something standing at the bottom of the stairs, would not be alarmed if he could see all of this object, whatever it is. The reason his heart palpitates is because he sees a little of it, but not all of it. Its edges fade away into the darkness, and this gives the boy's imagination a chance to work, and his imagination increases the action of the heart.

And so it is in religious matters. If we do not see clearly what it is that has caused this world-wide commotion in religious circles, we shall be the victims of a vague mistrust and an undefined dread, and this alarm will paralyze all the nerves of action and close the avenues of peace. Christians of all people on earth ought to be positive and radiant. They must know themselves and the world in which they are living. If they are nervous and hysterical, shrinking and scared, they will not be able to do their work effectively, nor will they be able to bear eloquent testimony to him who said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And this state of alarm is all the more lamentable just now because we are moving out, according to all the prophets, to engage in one of the most furious contests known in human history. Social and industrial forces have been loosened and are working mightily in directions which must be curbed if we are to escape catastrophe. Dan-

gers vast and terrible are lifting their heads which only a church sure of itself can face and overcome. The church of this century must be preëminently a church of power, and power is always conditioned on the clearness of conceptions of fundamental truth. Let us then this morning ask ourselves this question: What has happened? What has caused the present mistrust and uncertainty in the religious world? If we can find a satisfactory answer to that question, we shall have done a good day's work.

Six things have happened. Two of them happened long ago, and the remaining four are the results of the first two. No one can understand this present age unless he knows what happened early one Friday morning in the year 1492. A Spanish sailor shouted "Land!" In the summer of that year Christopher Columbus with ninety men started to sail westward over an ocean which seemed to have no western shore. For seventy days they have been sailing westward, and the ninety men are badly frightened. Columbus has coaxed them, pleaded with them, threatened them — and now they are on the verge of breaking out in desperate mutiny. In order to quiet them, he offers a reward to the first man who sights land. There have been, as he thinks, indications of land not far away. And so when the sun goes down that Thursday evening, October 20, 1492, ninety pairs of eyes peer wistfully into the twilight, and later on into the dark-

ness, eagerly looking for the longed-for shore. No ninety pairs of eyes ever stared and strained themselves as did those ninety pairs of eyes on that immortal night. It was two o'clock when one of the sailors on the *Pinta* shouted "Land! Land!!" I never can read the story without my heart leaping. That cry ushered in a new age. Ancient history ended then; modern history began. For four hundred years the cry has been, "Land! New land!" New land is what we seek. New land is what we find. Up to that time the European nations had been travelling eastward. Men went back to the old things, to the old monuments, the old tombs, the old manuscripts, the old lands.

But now the current of human thought has changed. From this time onward men are to search for new things, new truths, new lands — and the last four hundred years have been four hundred years of exploration. Men have gone to the centre of all the deserts, they have climbed to the top of all the mountains, they have gone to the bottom of all the seas. There are only two little spots on the planet which have not yet been explored, and they will be mapped before the century has run its course. Yes, the cry is, "New land!" The men in the mediæval ages lived in a world comparatively restricted. There was no outlet for the human mind, and so the mind worked upward. Men built that strange and fantastic palace of syllogism, argument, proposition, dream, fancy, guess,

known as scholasticism. It is a palace built of air. But when the Spanish sailor shouted *land*, the glory of scholasticism began to fade. For four hundred years men have been saying, "Give us land! Give us something real, substantial, solid. Give us a place to stand on, a place where we can build our homes, establish our institutions, build up our civilization." We are all under the sway of the spirit of that intrepid Italian, Christopher Columbus.

And the second event happened only twenty-nine years later. With men's faces turned toward the future, the question immediately arose: Can a man accept the new facts which he finds? Can he embrace the new truths which he arrives at? Can he confess the new principles which have been revealed to him by the experience of his soul? The question was settled at the Diet of Worms. It was settled by Martin Luther. He had found out some things which he believed to be true, and believing them to be true he published them; having published them, he was ready to defend them. But they contradicted what had been declared by the past. In past councils the church had spoken, and its decrees could not be changed. The advocate of liberty met the assembled hosts of authority. The electors and the princes and the great emperor himself were all present. Over their heads there rose rank above rank representatives of the most august and mighty hierarchy known to history. Bishops, archbishops, patriarchs, cardinals

—the whole culminating in the baptized Cæsar, the Bishop of Rome. The hierarchy says to the young man, "Recant," and his answer is, "I will not recant unless I am convinced by clear argument." All human history has been different since the Diet of Worms. Ever since then the mind has been free. It has been roaming everywhere. Everything in the heavens and on the earth and in the waters under the earth must be sifted and measured and analyzed and weighed. Everything must go into the crucible and be tested. Man has the right to accept the truth whenever and wherever he finds it. We are all under the sway of Martin Luther's soul. The great Italian and the great German, they walk like mighty spiritual giants before us across the centuries, and all our life is different because they lived and labored.

The other four things happened because of the work which Columbus and Luther did. And all these four things have happened within a hundred years. Space has been expanded enormously. To the ancients the universe was a small affair. The sun was only seventy-five miles away. The sky was solid, and the stars were brilliants tacked to it. The earth was conceived to be the centre of all. But in the sixteenth century a Pole by the name of Copernicus dethroned the earth. He proved that the sun is the centre, and that the earth is only one of several planets revolving round the sun. A still larger knowledge of the

solar system was gained in the next century by Galileo and Kepler. But all these three men were only boys sitting on the front door-steps of the great temple of immensity. Not one of them was permitted to go into the temple. It was William Herschel who first walked into the temple of space. He was the man who made the first great telescope, the first man who travelled all the way to the stars. On his way outward to the stars he doubled the diameter of the solar system by picking up a new planet, and when he reached the nearest of the stars he informed us that this star was two hundred thousand times farther from us than the sun. From this star he travelled to its nearest neighbor, and the distance was ten billions of miles. But from Herschel's day to this the astronomers have been going deeper and deeper into space. The great telescopes have found fifty millions of stars, and the photographic plates have found as many millions more. There is not one system, there are thousands of systems; not one universe, but many universes. The universes lie like islands surrounded by an unmeasured sea. Our solar system is only a tiny thing; our sun is but a tallow dip. Our little earth, what shall we say of it? It is nothing but a grain of sand lying upon a shore that has no bounds; it is nothing but a tiny bluebell blooming under rich vegetation on one of the lower slopes of the great mountain of God!

What must be the effect of all this upon our conceptions of God, man, and the world? What shall we think of the earth? What shall we do with the story at the beginning of Genesis which speaks as though the sun and the moon and the stars had been created to cast light upon this tiny speck of matter? Is that story the naïve fancy of a childlike mind? And what shall we think of man? Is he really great as he has always dreamed himself to be? or is he insignificant in everything save in the dimensions of his self-conceit? Has he a right to have any science or any religion in a universe so vast? It is here that we find the cause of agnosticism. The agnostic is a man who has been struck to the earth by this majestic vision of an immeasurable universe. All he can say is: "I don't know! I don't know! I don't know!" Or as Tennyson has expressed it: —

> "What am I?
> An infant crying in the night;
> An infant crying for the light;
> And with no language but a cry."

And what shall we think of the story of Christ's life and death? Can we any longer believe that God's only son would come to an earth so small and live and die for men like us? In the universe which modern astronomy has uncovered it is necessary to think out the entire Christian religion again.

Not only has space been expanded, but time has been enormously extended. Up to a hundred

years ago nearly everybody believed that the earth was only six thousand years old, and that the entire history of man might be comprised within those narrow limits.

Soon after the middle of the eighteenth century there was a physician in Edinburgh, James Hutton by name. Young Hutton, like many another doctor, found it difficult to secure a practice, and so he left the city and went to farming. He began to study the earth. He became interested in river beds, in pits, in hills and mountains. He watched the effect of rain and wind and ice, and he said to himself, "I think I could account for the present configuration of the earth if I only had time enough." In the next century the idea was taken up by another Scotchman, James Lyell, who stoutly maintained that there is no reason why God should not have acted through long periods of time in bringing the world to its present condition. The teachings of Lyell were taken up by Louis Agassiz and a score of other great geologists, and now it is a most fascinating story which geology has to tell us. It and paleontology assure us that man has existed on earth for millions of years, that there were long ages of animal life before man appeared, and unnumbered millenniums of vegetable life before there was an animal on the earth, and unnumbered æons when the earth was without form and void and existed as star-mist in space. But what must be the effect of all this on Christian

thought? If the margin of our Bible says that the race is six thousand years old, and if geologists say it is older, what is going to become of the margin of our Bible? And what place shall we give to Christ in this great unfolding of the race whose beginnings are hidden in the mists of an immemorial past? He seemed sufficient to meet the needs of two hundred generations; but will he be sufficient to account for the experience and progress of two hundred thousand generations before he came? In a little universe whose horizon was narrow and whose sky was low, and whose age could be expressed in four figures, Christianity seemed ample and sufficient; but hold it up in this larger universe, and will it fit? Is it large enough to cover all the newly discovered spaces and the newly discovered ages? Is it adequate for a universe whose sky is higher than the highest leap of the imagination, and whose horizons are all drowned in mist? Are the statements of theology large enough? Are the conceptions of Luther and Calvin and Wesley large enough? Are Paul's ideas large enough? Christianity must be thought out again. It must be correlated to a universe of which our fathers knew nothing.

Into this enlarged universe a new idea came, the idea of development. As soon as men discovered the real nature of the earth, they began to ask themselves, how did it come to be? While the geologists were asking, By what processes were the

oceans hollowed and the mountains built up? other men were asking, By what processes did vegetable and animal life assume their present forms? It was in the last half of the eighteenth century that a French naturalist, Buffon, suggested the idea of transmutation of species. But his suggestion had no effect upon the learned world. In 1790 Goethe published a most interesting book which he called "The Metamorphoses of Plants," in which the idea of transmutation of species was still further developed. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Lamarck and Oken carried the idea still further. But the world was not ready to receive their ideas. Everybody believed in special creation and in the immutability of species. But in the thirties a young Englishman, Charles Darwin, gifted with most wonderful eyes and the most marvellous patience, began to keep a note-book. Into that note-book he poured the results of all his observations. He took up the idea of the transmutation of species, and began to inquire the reason for it. For twenty-one years he gathered material, and when his edifice was completed, in the year 1859, he published "The Origin of Species," the most epoch-making book of the nineteenth century. Huxley and Tyndall, Lyell and Lubbock, and Herbert Spencer in England, Haeckel in Germany, Asa Gray and John Fiske in this country, came to Darwin's support, and in every department of thought the idea of develop-

ment is supreme to-day. All leading thinkers the world over are evolutionists. There are many kinds of them, but the one word is wide enough to cover them all. In the hands of masters like Drummond and Fiske this idea of development becomes one of the most bewitchingly fascinating ideas that has ever entered the mind of man since Jesus taught his high doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. It opens glorious vistas and gives magnificent visions, and pushes open windows that look out upon vast realms hitherto unvisited by the most daring imagination. I do not wonder that the world has gone after Darwin and accepted the principle of development. The universe is now read in the light of that idea. Paley, in the eighteenth century, compared the universe to a watch, a fine piece of mechanism put together and set running by the divine watchmaker. But now the universe is a flower blooming in the garden of God. Everything grows: languages, institutions, constitutions, governments, religions, races — Man has come up. This is why Tennyson can say: —

> "Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies
> Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower; but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is."

But what must be the effect of this on our conception of the Christian religion? If man has come

up from brute-life, is he the creation of God? and if everything is passing from less to more, from lower to higher, what becomes of sin? Was there ever a fall? and if there was never a fall, what is the meaning of the death of Christ? In an age which has accepted the doctrine of development, the whole teaching of Christianity concerning sin and the cross must be reëxamined and thought out again.

While some men were working with the universe, and other men were working with the rocks, and other men were busy watching the transmutations of plant and animal life, other men turned to the study of history. This is the last of the six things which have happened. The historic spirit was not born until near the close of the eighteenth century. The idea of humanity as an organism, passing through regular stages, was first suggested by Lessing, but it was Herder who first gave the idea amplification. Herder carried the principle into language and poetry and government and religion. Under his treatment the Bible became a new book. Since the days of Herder the old historical viewpoint and the old historical methods have completely vanished. There are no histories written in the eighteenth century which the world cares to read save the history of Gibbon. His "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" is the only history of the eighteenth century that has not been superseded. Herder's idea was taken up

by Schlegel, and worked out in his philosophy of history. Hegel took up the idea and also wrote a philosophy of history. The idea passed into France, and Auguste Comte worked it out in his "Positive Philosophy." The idea passed into England and inspired Buckle to write his "History of Civilization." The spirit came across the Atlantic, and Draper wrote his "Intellectual Development of Europe." The product of this historic spirit is what is known as historic criticism. All the records of the past are being studied from a new viewpoint. The human race is now seen to be a unit, and to pass through graded stages of development.

Now when men begin to study history, if they wish to cover the entire ground they cannot neglect the Bible. The Christian religion is an historic religion. The Old Testament is historic, and so is the New. It would be impossible, therefore, for the Bible to escape the influence of this new historic spirit. And if a man studies the Bible, he cannot fail to be impressed by those wonderful narratives which we call the gospels. Jesus of Nazareth is an historic character, and he must be studied from a new viewpoint. It was in the year 1835 that a young German professor, David Friedrich Strauss, brought out the second volume of his "Life of Jesus," probably the most startling book produced in the Christian church in the nineteenth century. Strauss was at this time only twenty-seven years of age. He had a mind that

revelled in negations. He struck at once at the miraculous element in the gospels, and denied that it is history. His book created a profound impression. Immediately Neander, Ullmann, and Tholuck, and many other distinguished scholars, went to work to find out if the things which Strauss had said were true. From the days of Strauss to the present time "Lives of Jesus" have been appearing. Up to the publication of Strauss's "Life of Jesus" there had not been written any "Life of Jesus" worthy of notice since the days of the apostles. Men in the Middle Ages cared little for the life of Jesus. Protestantism at first was not interested in the gospels. Martin Luther began his sermons with the Psalms and ended them with Paul's letters to the Galatians and Romans. John Wesley was converted by one of Paul's letters, and always gave Pauline thought a large place in all his sermons. It is only since the days of Strauss that preachers have been preaching the life of Jesus. Some of you are old enough to remember the day when the great words in the Christian pulpit were foreordination, predestination, sanctification — all Pauline words, and all of them banished to-day from the Christian pulpit. Ministers now are preaching about the Beatitudes of Jesus, the Lord's Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount, the Parables of Jesus, the Miracles of Jesus, the teaching in the upper chamber, the words from the cross. A western preacher writes

a novel without literary distinction, which has a sale of several hundreds of thousands of copies, because it deals with Jesus, — "In His Steps." What must be the effect of all this? In the first place it is causing the outside world to scrutinize the church with new severity. Is the Christian church Christian? Do Christians walk as Jesus walked? These are questions which are sounded on every side. And this new revelation which has come to us in the study of the man of Galilee has caused much heart searching among professing Christians. It has begotten in many hearts a sense of unworthiness, and has taken away from Christians much of the assurance which the church once possessed.

These, then, are the six things which have happened. The spirit of exploration and the passion of liberty have gone abroad through all the earth, and under the influence of that spirit and that passion the universe has been immeasurably expanded. Space is vaster. Time is longer. The universe is discovered to be a growing thing. Humanity itself grows, and the poet writes science as well as poetry when he says: —

> "Through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
> And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

If these are the things which have happened, why should anybody be alarmed? What is there in any

one of these six facts to cause the slightest uneasiness? Why should we be afraid of astronomy or geology, or biology or research? If the astronomers have made it clear that my Father's house is larger than I thought it was, then I shall value still more highly the privilege of being counted a child of the King. I will say to the astronomers, go on and pick up other millions of worlds, for they only prove still more clearly the extent of my Father's wealth. And if time is as long as geologists say it is, then I have a new revelation of God's patience. If he can spend so many ages in bringing about things to his liking, he will never grow weary in the long-drawn work of training and redeeming a race even so stubborn and slow as ours. And if it be true, as the biologists claim, that everything is growing, that humanity passes from lower to higher, then I will rejoice with a new joy when I read St. John's assertion, "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." The latest science gives me larger ground for hope; it lifts my expectations; it puts a deeper glory into my dreams. And if historical criticism has brought out into clearer light the face of Jesus, surely I will count historical criticism the dearest of my friends.

When we once come to see what science has accomplished within the last hundred years, we shall hold our heads higher as Christians and sing a more jubilant song. And when we use the adjective "new," we should bear in mind what it is to which

the adjective is applied. We sometimes speak of new things as though there were nothing left that is old. The fact is, everything is old except our thoughts. Astronomy is new, but the stars are old. We talk of the new geology, but the rocks are old. We speak of the new biology, but life is old. Men write of the new psychology, but the mind is old. We discuss the new theology, but God is old. We pride ourselves upon the new Biblical interpretation, but the Bible is old. God is old. The human heart is old. God and the heart belong together. And so in an age filled with the wonders of the microscope, and the marvels of the telescope, and the miracles of the spectroscope, we can kneel down by our bed every night and use the same words which our fathers and grandfathers used: —

> "Now I lay me down to sleep;
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep:
> If I should die before I wake,
> I pray the Lord my soul to take."

IV

HOW THE OLD CONCEPTION OF THE SCRIPTURES DIFFERS FROM THE NEW.—PART I

IV

HOW THE OLD CONCEPTION OF THE SCRIPTURES DIFFERS FROM THE NEW. — PART I

"God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." — Hebrews i : 1, 2.

WHEN the Westminster divines in the middle of the seventeenth century wrote out their Confession of Faith, they began by stating their doctrine of inspiration. In their judgment the doctrine of Holy Scripture is fundamental to everything else. Their reason for thinking so was that the Christian world was at that time engaged in a great controversy over the seat of authority. What is the seat of authority? The Roman Catholic church answered: "It is the church. The church is the interpreter of the Scriptures. The Scriptures without the church are dead. The Scriptures do not contain everything essential to salvation. They must be supplemented by tradition, and both tradition and the Scriptures must be interpreted by the church." This position was vigorously attacked by the Protestants. "The seat of authority," they said, "is the Bible. The Scriptures contain everything that

is essential to salvation. The Bible is to be read and interpreted by the individual Christian. Whatsoever cannot be proved by Scripture, cannot be forced upon the conscience of Christians."

A man who would deal successfully with the doctrines of the Christian church at the beginning of the twentieth century, must begin as the Westminster divines began, with the Scriptures. The doctrine of inspiration is in our day fundamental to every other doctrine. Ever since the oldest of us were born, the Bible has been the storm centre of the Christian world. A furious contest has been waged around it, and no one can approach it save through the smoke of this age-long conflict. The most varied and contradictory assertions are constantly being made concerning every portion of the Scriptures, and men and women everywhere are in great mental confusion. How widespread this confusion is, possibly very few of us imagine. The older people, as a rule, do not realize how disturbing are the influences which have been operative upon the minds of young men and women for the last twenty-five years. New fields of learning have been opened up and new studies have been added to the curriculum, new ways of thinking and of talking have been introduced, the result being that our boys and girls have difficulties concerning which their parents knew nothing. Moreover, there are persons who never have intellectual difficulties of any kind.

It is a matter for constant wonderment, the way

in which human beings differ from one another. Some of us, for instance, could not live without books. For us, as for Mrs. Browning, "The world of books is still the world." Without our books we should know little, and life would be stale, flat, and unprofitable. But there are men and women who care nothing at all for books. They are intelligent and on many points well-informed, good, sensible, wholesome people, who make good Christians and loyal citizens, and yet to them the best of books is little better than a bore. They do not get their information from the printed volume, they seem to breathe it in with the air. The man who loves books cannot be persuaded to get on without them; the man who does not love them cannot be induced to read them. There are men and women who never have the slightest difficulty with the Bible. They accept everything it contains without question, no matter what are the contradictions or discrepancies. No matter how unsavory certain of the pages, or how incredible the stories, everything is quietly accepted without reluctance and without a question. Such persons are always more or less nettled by their neighbors, who have objections and who are troubled by various kinds of doubts. But there are other people to whom the Bible is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. They do not know what to do with it. Parts of it are so coarse, pages of it cannot be read aloud. They do not know what to do with these.

They are offended by the atrocities and barbarities which are perpetrated under the sanction of the Almighty. And as for many of the miraculous stories, they seem to be as incredible as the stories of Baron Munchausen. And yet the Bible is supposed to be God's book. To become a member of the Christian church one must accept the Bible. By joining the church a man is supposed to say that he believes everything in the Bible from lid to lid.

Small wonder is it that many earnest, conscientious men and women are sorely perplexed. Their perplexity rises to the level of an actual distress. The Bible is their greatest reason for not being church members. They are good people, they love goodness, they want to be good themselves, they want to live and work with other good people, but they cannot say that they believe the Bible. It is a great stone which lies across their path. If some archangel from the court of heaven would only come down and roll the stone away, they feel they could accept with gladness the responsibilities of the Christian life. These perplexed and puzzled people can be numbered by the thousands. When Mr. Henry Drummond died a few years ago there was found among his papers a great mass of letters which he had received from persons living in all parts of the world, asking him questions concerning the difficulties which they had met with in the Scriptures. Henry Drummond was known to be an honest man, a man as courageous

as he was honest, a man whose soul had all its windows open to the light, and so men and women in every section of the earth came to him to make confession of their inward struggles to reach conceptions of the Scriptures which would satisfy their minds and hearts.

There are other persons who have no trouble with the Scriptures because they do not count the Scriptures any longer worthy of serious consideration. To them the Bible is obsolete. It contains a mass of myths and falsehoods, all of which have been exploded by the discoveries of science. To these people, as to Professor Goldwin Smith, the Old Testament is nothing but a millstone around the neck of Christians. Some of these persons even hate the Bible and never speak of it save in terms of indignation and scorn. They have read John W. Draper's book on the "Conflict between Science and Religion," in which book the writer makes science appear as a strong-limbed angel of God, whereas religion is always a great ass. A few years ago Dr. Andrew D. White, for twenty years president of Cornell University, brought out a ponderous work in two volumes of five hundred pages each, entitled, "Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom." Dr. White has been an omniverous reader, and into his big volumes he has gathered the long, sad story of the conflict which has raged between leaders of the Christian church and leaders in the world of science. He

shows how at every point, for nineteen hundred years, the discoveries of science have been resisted by priests and preachers, and how science has been obliged to make its way against the fiercest and most determined opposition of the professed defenders of the Christian faith. In astronomy and anatomy, in biology and medicine, in geography and geology, in chemistry and physics, in psychology and physiology and paleontology, it has been the same sickening, distressing story. The disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, with the Bible in their hands, have endeavored to overturn the truths of science by quotations from the Scriptures. A young man, after reading these two volumes of Dr. White's, is very likely to say, "What a lot of fools the Christian church has produced, and how can a man have respect for a book which has been for so many centuries the instrument of bigotry and the weapon by means of which men have attempted to put an end to all intellectual progress!" There never has been an evil that has not been defended by quotations from the Scriptures. Mormonism, slavery, tyranny, witchcraft, war, cruelty — all these have been sanctioned and proved justifiable by the Bible. Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Bassanio, in the "Merchant of Venice," words which indicate how keenly the great poet had felt the tragedy of this use of Scripture: —

> "What damned error, but some sober brow
> Will bless it, and approve it with a text."

What has made this long-drawn tragedy of Christian history possible? How does it happen that every scientific man for nineteen hundred years has been resisted and hated by a large number of the leaders of the Christian church? Does the fault lie in the Scriptures? If so, then the Scriptures are indeed fit for the fire. Or is the mischief caused by an erroneous conception of the Scriptures? If so, then let us have a new conception of them, and let us have it at once. There is a new conception of the Scriptures, and it is rapidly working its way into the consciousness of the whole Christian world. It was accepted long ago in Germany; it triumphed in England a generation ago in the midst of great convulsions and shakings of the heavens and the earth. During the last twenty-five years it has been taking possession of the mind and heart of the thoughtful people of the Christian church in America. The process has been attended here, as elsewhere, by rumblings and mutterings and an occasional explosion.

It is not easy for the world to work itself out of an old conception into one that is new. Ages of transition are always ages filled with earthquake and thunder. It is not easy for any man to give up a conception in which he has lived the larger part of his life, and make himself feel at home in a conception entirely different from the old one. The passage from a faith that is traditional to a faith that is vital is always more or less painful as well as hazardous.

Years ago when I was a student in the seminary, one of my classmates left the recitation room one day with tears running down his cheeks. Our professor in Hebrew had been saying certain things about the Old Testament which were a great surprise to this young man. My friend had been brought up on a western farm. He had spent a goodly portion of his life in hoeing corn. While hoeing corn a certain conception of the Bible had crystallized in his mind, which he supposed to be the very truth of God. The Bible to this young man was very much what the book of Mormon was to Joseph Smith. According to Joseph Smith's story the book of Mormon was found already written, carefully preserved in a sacred box. The leaves of the book were plates of gold bound together with three gold rings, and on the top of the book there was a pair of supernatural spectacles by means of which it was possible for Joseph Smith to interpret the mysterious language in which the divine book was written. According to our farmer the Bible had been written in heaven, bound in heaven, and dropped down in some mysterious way upon this earth. When the Hebrew professor told him the exact facts in the case, this young man became unnerved. With distress written on every feature of his face, he said, "I must get out of here, I shall be an infidel if I stay," and in a few days he left the school.

That mental distress has been the experience of

thousands of professing Christians within the last quarter of a century, Christians both young and old. The old conception seems so satisfactory and so complete that when one discovers it can be held no longer, his soul goes forth wounded and naked in search of a new doctrinal home. It is because of this unsettlement of mind that many persons feel it to be advisable to keep certain aspects of the truth hidden. "What is the use," they say, "in talking about things which only disturb and unsettle? The old conceptions are good enough. They were good enough for our fathers, and they are good enough for us. Why run the risk of making a person sceptical by calling in question the beliefs upon which he has built his life?"

It is a very plausible plea, but both dangerous and wicked. For every one person who is made a sceptic by knowing the entire truth concerning the Bible, a hundred people are made sceptical by the silence of religious teachers. We Christians are supposed to be lovers of the truth. We profess to follow him who said, "I am the truth;" shame on us then if we are ever afraid of the truth! The man who holds back the truth for fear he is going to disturb somebody's faith, has in him the heart of a coward. It does people good to be unsettled whenever they have settled down in a falsehood. Humanity gets on only by the upsetting of people. Not a step of progress is possible without somebody being hurt. If the leaders of the Christian

church had only been bolder in speaking out the truth as it is, many a young man would now be in the ministry who has been lost to the ministry forever, and thousands of men and women who are now hopelessly estranged from the Christian church would be enthusiastic workers in it. It was because Christian teachers allowed the rank and file of Christians to go on believing a theory of inspiration which is untenable that Robert G. Ingersoll was able to wield his enormous influence. If professing Christians had been instructed in right ways of thinking of the Scriptures, they would never have been disturbed by anything which Ingersoll ever said.

What has led to this new conception? The whole movement of modern thought. We are living in a new universe. The heavens are new, and so is the earth. We have a new knowledge of the body, a new knowledge of the mind, a new knowledge of the past, a new knowledge of everything. We do not look at any object as our fathers did. We cannot conceive the Bible as they conceived it fifty years ago. The conception of the Bible which is now dominating the thought of the most intelligent portion of the Christian world is as different from the conception which was held by our fathers as the medicine of to-day is different from the medicine of the days of Andrew Jackson. I do not mean to say that the old conception has vanished altogether from the earth. Vestiges of it will

undoubtedly remain for centuries to come. Old errors are long-lived; they do not die in one generation or in ten. I have sat at the table of a Presbyterian elder, a man of intelligence and wealth, who did not hesitate to assure me that he did not accept the Copernican astronomy, and was willing to live and die in the faith that the Bible is right when it says that the earth stands still and that the sun moves.

All thinking men in all departments have helped the world along to this new conception, but especial honor is due to a particular class of men known as the higher critics. The term "higher criticism" is one often met with in current literature, and the precise meaning of it ought to be in the possession of every member of the Christian church. It is a technical expression, and no one can know its meaning without instruction. Each class of scholars has its own particular dialect. Doctors when they are alone speak a language peculiar to themselves. The very simplest of diseases have a terrible sound when spoken by their lips. Lawyers also have a lingo of their own. We ordinary people do not understand them when they are speaking legally. Professional students of the Bible also have their own peculiar speech, and people who are not Bible students do not understand their learned phrases until they are explained. It would seem that anybody could tell the meaning of higher criticism. The adjective is surely simple; it means

loftier or more elevated. Criticism! ah, do we not know what that is! We have been criticised all our lives. It is a nagging, biting, contemptible habit of faultfinding. And higher criticism would be more contemptible and more unendurable than any other sort, because of its pretentious lordliness. The higher critics, then, according to this interpretation, are lordly faultfinders. Stand back, gentlemen, dare you touch the Scriptures? Who are you that you should find fault with the word of God, and insult us all by your lordly pretensions and your haughty assertions?

But higher criticism does not mean that at all. Criticism does not mean faultfinding. Criticism is nothing but careful study. I may skim a book, or I may read it critically. When I read it critically, I do not read it to find fault with it. I read it with discrimination and with a purpose to know just what the book means. When I write down my judgment of the book, what I write is criticism. Every sentence of it may be praise, but it is criticism none the less. A critic then is not a faultfinder but a careful student. But why *higher* criticism? Because there are two kinds of Bible study. A man may study the text of Scripture, or he may study the thought of it. There are thousands of manuscripts, and among them no two agree. There are tens of thousands of verbal variations; letters, syllables, words, are dropped out or transposed, sentences are more or less

mangled by the carelessness of scribes, so that all these manuscripts must be compared one with another. By this comparison scholars are able to make out what was approximately the text written by the author. Men who do this sort of work are textual critics. They are sometimes called lower critics because they deal simply with the body of the Scriptures and not with their soul. Men like Lachmann, Bengel, Tischendorf in Germany, and Tregelles, Westcott, and Hort in England, and a whole host of others have given a large part of their life to the study of the text.

After the text has been made out, then the work of other men begins. When we have found the text, the next question is, What does it mean? When was this thing said? What was the significance of it? What did it mean to the men who heard it? What application has it to us? A man who engages in this kind of study we call a higher critic. Higher criticism then is nothing more than the careful historical study of the Bible. Higher critics are nothing but men who carefully study the Scriptures by the most approved scientific methods. They are men deserving of our deepest gratitude and our highest praise. Higher criticism is often a bogy to certain people, but it ceases to be a bogy when you get it out into the light where you can see what it is. Higher critics are frequently sneered at as enemies of the human race, but many of them are God's noblemen when you once know who they are.

I have sometimes heard people say that they did not believe in higher criticism when I was certain they did not know what they were saying. It is easy to use words without knowing what they mean. I have heard a man say he did not believe in doctors, but when his child fell sick at midnight he telephoned for the doctor. I have heard people say they did not believe in medicine. They spoke scornfully of drugs. But if such a person should have his foot crushed he would want a surgeon, and when the surgeon began his operation the patient would be willing to be drugged. When people say they do not believe in medicine or drugs, they speak unadvisedly with their lips. They do not believe in using medicine as it is sometimes used, or they do not believe in certain doctors who are quacks. And if that is what one means, why not say it? It is wicked for a Christian man or woman to use the English language in such wholesale and sweeping ways. If a man does not believe in certain higher critics, he has a perfect right to say so, for all higher critics are not alike.

In the realm of Biblical scholarship, as in every other realm, there are faddists and extremists and fanatics, men who lose their head and say and write things quite ridiculous. But this does not prove that all higher critics are fools, or that higher criticism is silly or false. The higher critics have been at work on our Scriptures for over two hundred years, and they have made the Bible

a new book for the Christian world. All honor to them, heroic, patient, long-suffering men, devoted to the truth, laboring ofttimes amid misunderstanding and denunciation, in order that succeeding generations may have a fuller and more satisfying knowledge of the things which have been written for our consolation!

But in all this let us bear in mind that it is our conception and not the Bible which is new. We think differently concerning the Bible, but the Scriptures themselves remain unchanged. Nothing substantial has been cut out of the Bible, and nothing has been put into it since the days of Luther. We have a new science, but the old material universe has not been changed one iota; and so we have a new conception of the Bible, but the Bible itself is what it has been from the beginning. I overheard two aged men talking one day about the Revised Version. Both of them seemed very wise, and one of them especially spoke with deliberation and gravity. Among other things he said, "I do not wonder that the Bible is considered a good book, it ought to be good; they keep cutting things out and putting other things in; in order to keep it up to date, they bring out a new version every little while. There is no reason why it should not be fine."

I suppose there are people who think that as a result of all the discoveries made by recent scholarship the Bible has been amended, expurgated. Such

persons are mistaken. Our King James's version dates from the beginning of the seventeenth century. About twenty-five years ago a new version was made. Many of the greatest scholars of the world were engaged in this revision. But when they had completed their work the old book was practically unchanged. Not one book was dropped out of the big volume. If any one alarmed, thinking that possibly one of the books has escaped, should plunge into this book, he would hear a cheery voice saying what Paul said to the Philippian jailer, "Do thyself no harm, we are all here!" Not a chapter was dropped out all through the Old Testament or the New. Not a verse was expunged which affects any cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion. A few verses here and there were removed, because there were good reasons for thinking that these verses had slipped into the body of the text from the margin of some ancient manuscript. But, generally speaking, the Bible to-day is just what it was in the days of the Reformation.

So long as men continue to think about anything at all, they will think about the Bible. What men think about the Bible does not change the nature or the structure of the Bible itself. In the second century of our era a famous astronomer by the name of Claudius Ptolemy worked out an interpretation of the heavens, whereby the earth was made the centre of the solar system, with the sun and planets revolving round it. That inter-

pretation swayed the world for fourteen hundred years. It made no difference to the sun. Ptolemy had a wrong conception, but the sun kept right on shining. He flooded every day with light, and went out into the fields every summer and aided the farmers in bringing in their crops. The Copernican theory now holds sway; but the sun shines no more brightly in these modern days than it did when Claudius Ptolemy was counted the greatest astronomer in the world. The Bible is the sun in the firmament of thought. It has shone for ages and will shine on forever. No matter what man may think of it, it will go right on shining. Upon the path of the last man who builds his home upon this earth the old book will cast a sacred light. To-day and to-morrow, and down to the last syllable of recorded time, this great book will be a lamp to men's feet and a light to their path.

We have then the old Bible and the new conception of it. We are now ready to consider the question: In what respects does the new conception differ from the old?

According to the new conception, we must cut off some of the Biblical fringes. There have been things bound up with our Bibles which have not been a part of the Scriptures. In many of our Bibles, for instance, you will find certain dates printed in the margin. Those dates are worthless. They embody the results reached by a great scholar

who lived two hundred and fifty years ago, James Usher. After a deal of labor he proved to his own satisfaction that the world was created four thousand years before the birth of Christ. Very unfortunately his calculations were printed in the English Bible, and in time people made no distinction between the chronology of Usher and the writings of the prophets. Usher was only a fallible man: how fallible you may see from the awful advice which he gave Charles I in regard to breaking the word which he had given to the Earl of Strafford. The scholarship of Usher has been superseded long ago, and in rubbing out his dates we do not touch the Scriptures.

But more than the dates of Usher must go. Many of the headings of the books of the Bible are erroneous. Those headings were not put there by the authors of the books. They express the conclusions reached by scholars of various ages. For instance, Genesis is called the First Book of Moses, Exodus, the Second Book of Moses, and so on. Those headings do not appear in the original Hebrew. They were introduced in the Greek translation of the Scriptures by some Alexandrian scholars in the third century before Christ. Because those Alexandrian scholars called those books the Books of Moses, it does not follow they were written by him. In the New Testament the letter to the Hebrews is ascribed to the apostle Paul. The letter itself does not say Paul wrote it; there are good

internal evidences for thinking he did not write it. The heading is not a part of the letter. We have a right to throw the heading away if for any reason it seems desirable to do so.

The interpretations also of certain books must be thrown aside. If you will turn to the Song of Songs, you will see that each chapter is preceded by a brief interpretation of its contents. According to that interpretation, the book narrates a dialogue between Christ and his church. This interpretation had its birth in the allegorical or mystical school of interpretation. For many hundreds of years Bible students took delight in reading all sorts of beautiful and mystical meanings into the text of Scripture. Every sentence was supposed to have a deep and glorious meaning. The most commonplace and prosaic statements were filled full of spiritual truth. But the mystical interpretation of Scripture has long since been superseded. There is no reason whatever for thinking that the man who wrote the Song of Songs was thinking about Christ or his church. The Song of Songs is an Oriental love poem. According to the story, a beautiful Jewish girl falls in love with a poor shepherd, and she is true to him amidst all temptations, refusing to be bought by the gold of a king. The Song of Songs gains immensely when we throw away the mystical interpretation of it.

Modern scholarship reminds us that we must

not put all the Bible books on the same level. The scholars, of course, have always known this, but the people have been prone to forget it. This has been especially the case since the Reformation. In the fires of that furious contest all these books were melted and fused, and until recently the Bible has been looked upon as though it were one solid mass of truth, every part of it equally divine, and every sentence of it equally authoritative. But we err greatly whenever we consider the Bible thus. These books are not on the same level. For some reasons it is a misfortune that we call the Scriptures "the Book." The Jews had a long name for the Old Testament. They called it the "Law, the Prophets, and the Writings." They gave the Law a sacredness and an authority which they never gave the Prophets. And they gave the Prophets a place of superiority which they denied to the Writings. They would not admit that Esther was equal to Genesis, or that Nehemiah was on a level with Isaiah. Nor have the wisest scholars ever admitted that it is right to put the Old Testament on a level with the New. Fifteen hundred years ago Augustine declared, "It is wronging the New Testament if the Old Testament is placed on a level with it." Not only are the various books to be regarded as possessing different degrees of authority, but we must make distinctions in the same book, for in the same book there is often a temporal element running side by side with

the eternal. Jesus used the Old Testament Scriptures with the greatest freedom. He would take up two sentences, hold to the one and throw the other away. "It has been said by them of old times, thus and thus . . . but I say unto you." Thus freely did he deal even with the things that were written in the Law. All the ritual legislation became obsolete long ago. The civil legislation was forever abandoned when the New England theocracy failed. There are moral sanctions in the Old Testament which a progressing race has left behind.

The new scholarship makes it clear that the Bible was not produced instantaneously. Like all things else which have ever been upon this earth, it grew. Through at least fifteen hundred years it kept on growing. And in it, therefore, we have the advancing stages of an unfolding life. A particular race beginning near the bottom climbs little by little in the face of tremendous obstacles from the darkness of barbarism into a glorious light. Now in all growing life there must be that which is immature, crude, mistaken. If a race grows as a man does, there must be first childhood and then youth. What a race does and thinks as a child, it will cease to think and do when it becomes a man, for a race like a man puts away childish things. If you are ever tempted therefore to make sport of the crudities of the Old Testament, bear in mind that without these crudities

the fuller life would have been impossible. We are living in a scientific age when men are intensely interested in origins. Why should you push the Old Testament away with scorn when it contains the story of the origins of our religion? A book is not to be despised simply because parts of it have been outgrown. I shall never forget the day when I learned to read a certain sentence in the primer, "An old ape, can he hop?" My boyish heart leaped with joy when I achieved that glorious victory. I do not despise that primer, for by mastering just such sentences I became able in time to read the philosophy of Hegel, the tragedies of Shakespeare, and the gospel according to St. John.

The Christian church is coming to see that the Bible is not a book of science. There are different spheres of knowledge, and the Bible is supreme in only one of them. The men who wrote the Scriptures knew nothing of science as we understand it to-day. They were ignorant of physiology, geology, geography, biology, zoölogy, astronomy. As Drummond has well said, if the Bible had intended to teach any science whatever, it would have taught medicine first of all. And everybody knows that the science of medicine is not taught in the Scriptures. It is because men have persisted in the belief that the Bible does teach science that the awful tragedy of which Dr. White has given us the history was made possible. Augustine said to the scientists of his day, "If

you assert that people can live on the other side of the earth, you give the lie direct to the Holy Ghost." Both Calvin and Luther made fun of Copernicus, Luther calling him a fool because he contradicted the book of Joshua, in which it is expressly declared that the sun moves while the earth stands still. It was as late as 1768 that John Wesley asserted that if we give up our belief in witchcraft, we must give up the Bible. Through a large part of the nineteenth century it was stoutly maintained that the early chapters in Genesis are scientifically true. All sorts of expedients were adopted in order to harmonize science with religion, Genesis with geology; but all these attempts failed. And all such attempts must forever fail, for the Bible is not a book of science, but a book of religion.

Modern scholarship has also compelled us to give up the doctrine of verbal inspiration. According to that theory, the Bible is inerrant — there is no admixture of error in it. It is an infallible book. This theory is no longer tenable. The Bible contains errors. There are errors in the text. The text in many places is undoubtedly corrupt. There are errors in translation. The Jewish historians occasionally slipped. The conceptions of the physical universe held by the men who wrote the Scriptures are not the conceptions which we know to be true. It is not wise, therefore, to use the word "infallible." If you use it, you are under the necessity of explaining what you mean. The Roman Catholic

church in the year 1870 laid down the doctrine of papal infallibility. It has been obliged ever since to deal in explanations. According to some of the best Roman Catholic scholars the Pope has never yet spoken infallibly. That is, he has never yet spoken ex cathedra on a question of faith or morals for the guidance of the entire Christian church. His encyclicals are addressed simply to different sections of the church, and hence may be superseded by some future Pope in some coming generation. If we say that the Bible is infallible, we use a word difficult to manage. The Bible is not infallible in its words, for no translation is faultless. It is not infallible in its language; for though the style is good, it is not perfect. It is not infallible in its facts, for an historian occasionally slips. It is not infallible in its theories, for its theories of the physical universe are mistaken. It is not infallible in its arguments, for some of its arguments are weak. It is not infallible in its moral sanctions, for the Hebrews undoubtedly sometimes confounded their own impulses with the voice of God. It is not infallible in the expectations of even its greatest men, for all the apostles expected Jesus to return within their own lifetime. In what sense, then, is the Bible an infallible book? If a man earnestly wants to find his way to God, the Bible will surely help him find that way. In that sense, and in that sense only, have we any right to say the Bible is infallible.

V

HOW THE OLD CONCEPTION OF THE SCRIPTURES DIFFERS FROM THE NEW.—PART II

V

HOW THE OLD CONCEPTION OF THE SCRIPTURES DIFFERS FROM THE NEW. — PART II

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable."
— 2 Timothy iii : 16.

THE Bible is at present the subject of world-wide discussion. Even the Roman Catholic church, the most conservative of all the branches of Christendom except the Greek church, has recently appointed a Biblical Commission, because the Pope asserts that the time has come for the Apostolic See to declare what must be infallibly maintained by Roman Catholics, and what reserved for further investigation or left to the judgment of each individual.

In my last sermon I stated that modern scholarship insists upon making a distinction between the text of Scripture and traditions which have crept into our Bible in the form of dates, headings of books, and interpretations. It also insists that all books of the Bible are not of equal value. The Old Testament is not on a level with the New, nor are the several books of either Testament equally authoritative. Ecclesiastes is not on a level with

Isaiah, nor is 2 Peter on a level with the gospel according to St. Mark. Modern scholars emphasize the fact that the Bible is a record of a revelation that is progressive. There is a long distance between Samuel hewing Agag to pieces and Jesus praying for his enemies upon the cross. In a long-drawn process of development we must expect crudities and immaturities in the earlier stages. The Bible is no longer considered an authority in science. It is a book of religion. Its aim is to reveal God. It does not pretend to teach man science. And whenever it has been compelled to do so, it has proved unequal to the task. Finally, the Bible is now confessed to have errors in it. The men who wrote it were not infallible. The history is not at every point accurate. Scientific conceptions are not always true. The morality commended cannot be commended in the light that has come to us in Jesus Christ. I hope you have all been able to follow me without reluctance thus far, for these five things are only the commonplaces of the world of scholarship. All Bible scholars of any standing in Europe, England, and America have acknowledged these five things long ago.

But a conception of the Bible which admits these five things is one which differs as widely from that entertained fifty years ago as the Copernican astronomy differs from the Ptolemaic. A tremendous revolution has taken place, and the reverberations

of it are still in the air. The battle was not nearly so terrible in this country as it was in England. We are a busy, rushing people, and do not give the attention to problems in the world of thought which is given on the other side of the sea.

In the year 1860 a volume appeared in England entitled, "Essays and Reviews." It was written by seven distinguished educators and religious leaders, among them being Dr. Temple and Professor Jowett. The Essay upon the Bible was written by Professor Jowett, and in the essay he gave this advice, "Interpret the Scriptures like any other book." It would be impossible to describe the storm which this book occasioned. The whole religious part of the English nation was thrown into a paroxysm of terror. Papers and magazines were filled with the most intense and almost furious discussions, and the authors of the books were denounced as infidels and enemies of the church.

In the year 1862 Bishop Colenso brought out a book upon the Pentateuch. In his work in South Africa he had come to the point where it was no longer possible for him to teach the book of Genesis in the way in which it had been taught in England since the days of the Reformation. With great fearlessness he wrote down and printed his conclusions concerning that book. A storm immediately burst upon his head which seemed likely to drive him from the English church. But Colenso was a brave man as well as an honest one. The old explanations

having once become shams in his eyes, he cried out, "Shall a man speak lies in the name of the Lord!" and dared to stand without flinching against the assaults of the great majority of his fellow-members of the English church.

But the world does move in spite of all the exertions of the people who want it to stand where it is. The leaven once inserted, worked with prodigious power, and twenty-five years later eleven clergymen of Keble College, the very fortress and home of conservatism, brought out a volume entitled, "Lux Mundi," in which the new conception of the Scriptures was boldly expounded. One of the chapters in this book was written by Charles Gore, who has recently been elevated to the bishopric, and in that chapter the writer made one concession after another, coming at last to the conclusion that there is no authoritative definition of inspiration which can be imposed upon the conscience of the members of the Anglican church. "Lux Mundi" appeared in 1889, and four years later Professor Sanday delivered his Bampton lectures on Inspiration, in which he said things which would have caused an earthquake a quarter of a century before. But so rapidly had the Christian world advanced that his lectures created little more than a passing ripple.

Somewhat later Professor Sayce of Oxford, the most distinguished Assyriologist in England, brought out a volume which had been looked forward to by conservative scholars with the most

ardent anticipations. But, alas! when the volume appeared it was discovered that even Professor Sayce himself had become convinced that the history in the book of Daniel is erroneous, that some of the facts in the book of Esther cannot be admitted, that the dates in the book of Ezra cannot be harmonized, and that several of the institutions and stories in the book of Genesis are of Babylonish origin. And so it may be said that all Bible scholars the world over, both radical and conservative, have given up the old conception of verbal inspiration.

The question now arises, Where are we? If we admit these things, what then? To one brought up under the old conception it might seem that we have no Bible left. How mighty is the revolution which has been wrought in the mind of Christendom within the last half century can be seen by an examination of books that were written and sermons that were preached since many of us were born. Dean Burgon, in 1861, said in Oxford: "The Bible is the very utterance of the Eternal. It is as much God's own word as if high heaven were opened and we heard God speaking to us with human voice. Every book is inspired alike, and is inspired entirely. The Bible is filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit of God: the books of it, and the words of it, and the very letters of it." That was the teaching in England. And Dr. Hodge expressed the teaching in America when he said:

"The books of Scripture are one and all, in thought and verbal expression, in substance and in form, wholly the word of God, conveying with absolute accuracy and divine authority all that God meant to convey, without human additions or admixtures. Infallibility and authority attach as much to the verbal expression in which the revelation is made as to the matter of revelation itself." According, then, to the theory of verbal inspiration, the Bible is indisputably the word of God, and endowed with all the perfections of that word; it is exempt from error in doctrine, in history, and in science.

Whence did this theory come? We inherited it from Romanism, and Romanism got it from Judaism. It was an idea which arose and gradually took shape in the period between the return from the Babylonian captivity and the coming of Jesus. After the days of Ezra there was no prophet of commanding stature and piercing insight in Israel. The writings of the prophets of the sixth and seventh centuries, together with the books which were ascribed to Moses, were about all that was left of the Jerusalem of the olden time, and these writings fell into the hands of men who regarded them with a reverence which became at last idolatry. The books ascribed to Moses were regarded with special veneration. Rabbis began to say that the Pentateuch was dictated to Moses by God himself, that Moses was an amanuensis, that while he wrote there was a total suspension of his

human faculties, he responding to God's influence just as a lyre responds to the touch of a musician; and that God dictated to Moses the account of his own death. As time went on this theory became more and more extreme. Every jot and tittle of the Scriptures was inspired, the most commonplace sentences were supposed to have marvellous and divine meanings in them. By and by the name of God became so sacred the rabbis would not speak it. The result is that nobody to-day knows how the ancient Hebrews pronounced their name of God. For four hundred years the rabbinical spiders spun cobwebs all over the Scriptures, and those slender threads little by little hardened into steel, so that when Jesus appeared the Hebrew people were immeshed in a network of tradition.

This idea of verbal inspiration blighted the spiritual life of the nation. The Pharisees became worshippers of a book instead of worshippers of God. Christ speaks with hot indignation of the blindness and stupidity of the religious leaders of his day. "You men," he said, with scorching scorn, "strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. You men make of no effect the word of God through your traditions." Because of this mechanical and narrow conception of inspiration, the religious leaders of Israel had become pettifoggers and pedants. They washed the outside of the platter and left the inside unclean. They would not put their sandalled feet upon the marble pavement of Pilate's Judgment

Hall, because to touch Roman marble would defile them; but they would stand there on God's own ground and shout out of throats filled with venom: "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

This doctrine of verbal inspiration, elaborated by the Jewish rabbis, was taken up in the second century by several leaders in the Christian church. The Christian church found herself confronted by a hostile world. Against her were arrayed the wealth and the learning and the power of the nations. The only thing she had was the Scriptures, and it was natural she should give to these an appreciation that was likely to run beyond all bounds. Tertullian and Irenæus and Origen fell into ways of talking about the Scriptures closely resembling the phraseology of the Jewish rabbis. We find Ambrose saying, "Moses opened his mouth and poured forth what God said to him." Other men went still farther. Little by little there grew up in the church the idea that every word in the Scriptures is the eternal word of God, and that in this book there can be no error whatsoever. In the process of time the Bible fell into the background, and the church came to the front as the authoritative teacher of men. The Bible was not conceived to be any less divine than it always had been, but it was simply ignored. It became a sort of idol, something to be looked at with reverence, but not to be touched. A few men through the Middle Ages studied the Scriptures and loved them,

but the great masses of the people never saw the Bible and knew nothing whatever about it. At the time of the Reformation both in Germany and in England large numbers of priests knew almost nothing of the Scriptures.

In the sixteenth century Martin Luther broke the Roman Catholic church in two. He studied the Bible for himself, and saw at once that the larger part of what Rome had been saying was pretence and innovation and tradition. Luther, therefore, treated the church with great freedom, criticising the Pope, calling attention to the errors which had been sanctioned by church councils. Finding deliverance by believing in Jesus Christ, he became also very free in his treatment of the Scriptures. No book in the Bible had significance for him which did not tell him of Jesus. He tossed aside the book of Jude as worthless, he cared little for the book of the Revelation, saying that it was not apostolic. In great scorn he said the epistle of James was an epistle of straw, that is, it is an epistle fit only to be burned. Martin Luther was too free in his dealings with the Scriptures. He was impulsive, and often said and did things which cannot be defended. The church would have suffered loss if all the books of the Bible which Martin Luther did not like had been cast out of it. Calvin and Zwingli were also free in their treatment of the Scriptures, but not so reckless as Luther.

But in the seventeenth century there began to

spring up that same mechanical view of inspiration which had dominated the Jewish church and which had been held theoretically for a thousand years by the Catholics. The process was a natural one, I am not sure but that it was an inevitable one. The seventeenth century was a century of storm and struggle. Protestants were beset on every side. They had cast aside the authority of the church; it was natural that they should turn for authority to the Bible. The attacks of the Jesuits were terrible. The Jesuits pointed with pride to an infallible church; it was natural that the Protestants should point with pride to an infallible Bible. The Jesuits claimed that humanity needs a supreme tribunal — such a tribunal as the church. The Protestants pointed to the Scriptures, "Here is the supreme tribunal, here is the tribunal which makes no mistakes!" With the Jesuits on the one side and the rationalists on the other, it is not surprising that the Protestant theologians dwelt more and more on the perfections of the Bible. In the furnace heat of the greatest conflict which the world has ever known all lines of stratification were obliterated, and the Bible became one solid mass of lustrous gold. The style of the language was perfect — any suggestion of imperfection was blasphemous. Even the vowel points in the Hebrew had all been inserted by inspiration. Every part of the Scripture was of equal divinity and of equal authority, for God wrote it all. At the close of

the seventeenth century a distinguished scholar did not hesitate to say, "Not a word is contained in the Holy Scriptures which is not in the strictest sense inspired, the very punctuation not excepted." To such lengths will any theory run when it falls into the hands of men who lack insight and common sense.

If you ask why so absurd a theory held such long-continued sway over the minds of men, the answer is that the theory of verbal inspiration is the simplest of all possible theories, and the most easily managed. If you can say that God wrote this book from the first word to the last, you say something which a child can understand, and so long as you believe this you know exactly where you are. If anybody says there are mysteries in the Bible, you can reply there are mysteries in nature; if some one says there are contradictions in the Scriptures, you can say there are contradictions everywhere. If some one says there are pages here which are unsavory or which have apparently no significance, you can say that that is because we do not discern the hidden, spiritual meanings. If some one says there are moral atrocities sanctioned in the Bible, you can reply with indignation, "Who are you that you should find fault with God?" A tight, cast-iron theory is exceedingly satisfactory, because so long as you have it you know where you are, and any other theory, no matter what it may be, is loose and

gets you into trouble. If you say there is a human element in the Bible, then who is going to tell which is human and which is divine? If you say there are errors in the Bible, how is a man to know what is error and what is truth? If you say that the Bible writers were mistaken in scientific matters, the question comes, May they not have been mistaken in everything? And so men say in their haste: All the Bible or none. I will swallow it whole, or I will have none of it. You say there are errors in it, then it is all a falsehood; if these men were mistaken, then we have no revelation, we might as well burn up the Bible, the church is doomed to destruction, the world is going to the devil, let us all sit down and cry! That is the way men speak when they speak foolishly.

But an idea must not be given up simply because it is hard to manage. We must use the powers of our mind when we study the Bible, just as we use them when we study anything else. We must discriminate, we must think, we must reason. One reason why the theory of verbal inspiration was dominant so long was because it ministers to man's laziness. A man can say very reverently: "This is God's word," and then let the dust settle on the pages of it. Many a Christian has kept the Bible in his house just as though it were an old horseshoe — certain to bring good luck. A man does not reverence the Bible simply by saying beautiful things about it, he reverences it most

when he goes into it most deeply, questions it, wrestles with it, compels it to give up its deep secrets. Nor should we allow ourselves to be stampeded by any man who tells us that the Bible contains errors. There are not so many errors in the Bible as some people imagine. Ever since the German historian Niebuhr constructed the history of early Rome, and demonstrated the unhistorical character of certain Roman stories, there has been a school of scholars inclined to doubt everything.

The history of the criticism of Homer is very interesting. Distinguished scholars came to the conclusion that Homer never lived and that Troy never existed ; but in the fulness of time a German grocer of Indianapolis, named Schliemann, went over to Asia Minor and dug up Troy. Everybody believes in Troy now. It was once supposed that a man by the name of Menes was ruler of Egypt several thousands of years before Christ. Then the time came when nobody believed that Menes ever lived — he was a creation of the imagination. By and by Professor Petrie dug up the mummy of the man. Everybody now believes in Menes. Not long ago many scholars were saying that the art of writing did not exist previous to 600 B.C., and that therefore many of the things stated in the Old Testament are discredited. But only the other day they dug up a copy of a code of laws established by Hammurabi, king of Babylon, who lived and reigned before Abraham came into Canaan.

Do not be frightened when people tell you that the Bible is full of errors. There are a few errors, but the Bible is not full of them. It is well to bear in mind also that the errors in the Bible are only incidental. There are errors and errors. Some errors are vital, other errors are insignificant. If I am preaching a sermon on the text, "Children, obey your parents," I might mispronounce a word, it would be an error; and I might make a mistake in a date, which would also be an error; and I might say that I was quoting from Tom Moore, when I was really quoting from Robert Burns; and I might use an illustration founded on an erroneous conception of chemistry or biology. But errors such as those would not invalidate the force of my argument. My truth would still be truth, and my sermon would still be true, and these errors would only be tiny knots in the texture of my discourse. All the errors in the Bible need never disturb you in the least, if you really are in earnest in striving to find your way to God. Dr. Luthardt says that the little discrepancies are only pebbles; they do not block the way. A distinguished Scotchman, Dr. Dods, says that the errors are like so many cracks in a glacier—a man whose mind is bent on his goal takes them in with his stride; a trifler may dip his foot into one of them and get a twisted ankle.

The collapse of the old dogma of verbal inspiration has been caused by a study of the Scriptures.

We never know what is going to happen when men really study the Bible. Men did not study the Bible, and the Roman Catholic church grew mightier and more autocratic and more corrupt. Luther studied the Bible, and Protestantism was born. For the last hundred years men have been studying the Bible as it was never studied since it was written. Men know to-day as they never knew before how these writings came to be. When a young man goes to a theological school, he hears things which startle and discomfit him. Most young men go to the school of theology with a pagan conception of the Bible as a divine book which has dropped down out of heaven as the Koran is said to have done in the legend. With this idea in his mind he at once enters upon a process of disillusionment. He is told that there are a hundred and fifty thousand variations in the text of the New Testament. He discovers that when the New Testament writers quote the Old Testament, they do not quote it accurately. He learns to his amazement that the rabbis wrote the Old Testament Scriptures in consonants only, and that the vowels were inserted centuries after these rabbis were dead, so that in some cases it is impossible to tell the meaning of the words. The consonants in the word "bed" are the same as the consonants in the word "staff," and we shall never know whether Jacob leaned on the top of his *bed* or on the top of his *staff*.

And then the history of the canon of Scripture surprises him exceedingly. These books grew up in the most haphazard way imaginable; they came together how and when nobody knows. Some books had difficulty in getting in. Ecclesiastes and Esther came within one of being left out of the Old Testament, 2 Peter and 2 and 3 John and the book of Revelation had a difficult time to get into the New Testament. The student is surprised to find that in the oldest manuscript of the New Testament which has come down to us there is an epistle of Barnabas, also a piece of writing known as the Shepherd of Hermas. He finds also that in the Alexandrian manuscript, one of the oldest of all, there are two Letters of Clement which in some mysterious way have disappeared from the New Testament as we have it to-day.

And when our student studies more deeply, he is astounded to find that the Hebrew historian can slip, and that Hebrew historians use documents just as Gibbon and Ranke and the other historians do. He is amazed to find that even the apostles were mistaken in expecting Jesus to come back in their own lifetime, and he is dumfounded to find that even the great Paul in the greatest of his chapters, the fifteenth of 1 Corinthians, embodies this error of judgment, for does he not say, "We shall not all sleep"? A theological student at the end of the first year of his seminary course is the most demoralized individual to be found on

this earth. His early conception of the Bible has been torn down all the way to the cellar, and he is obliged to build up a new conception from the foundations. And the struggle through which a theological student must go is an experience which must come to every Christian who studies and thinks. Many Christians do not like to be thus shaken and unsettled and disturbed, but there is no possible escape. It is only through struggle that we reach larger truth.

> "Not a truth has to art
> Or to science been given,
> But brows have ached for it,
> And souls toiled and striven."

The old conception is vanishing from the earth, and let all the members of the Christian church rejoice. The doctrine of verbal inspiration was not a part of the Scriptures. It was nothing but a tradition of men. Harnack is right when he says that no other remnant of Romanism has hindered the growth of Protestantism as this has done. It was a silly superstition, a veritable reptile in the garden of the Lord. Because of this dogma of inspiration, Christianity in the popular mind has been arrayed against science, and young men everywhere are inclined to think that men of science have more truth than the Christian church. Christianity has also been arrayed against progress. Fifty years ago there were ministers all over the country defending slavery and quoting from this

book. And the result was that Wendell Phillips, a true servant of God, and scores of other noble men, were driven into an attitude of hostility to the Christian church. Every man who has ever attempted to do anything for the emancipation of woman has been cudgelled with texts from this book. And so Elizabeth Cady Stanton and scores of other noble women have been led to despise the Bible and to fear the Christian church as an oppressor of their sex. It has arrayed Christianity against humanity; the darkest blot in the history of New England is the hanging of nineteen men and women accused of witchcraft in Salem. What made that awful tragedy possible? Nothing but the literal reading of the words in Exodus, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Hundreds and thousands of men and women have been hung and burned because Christians have supposed that that sentence expresses the eternal will of God. Nearly a hundred years after the Salem tragedy John Wesley declared that we must give up the Bible if we give up our belief in witchcraft. And it has helped to estrange the wage-earners from the Christian church.

The doctrine of verbal inspiration gave Charles Bradlaugh his magnificent opportunity in England of ridiculing Christianity. And what Charles Bradlaugh did in England Robert G. Ingersoll did in the United States. So long as men held the old conception, there was no answer to Bradlaugh and

Ingersoll. Each man would quote the most savage things said in the Old Testament, and then ask his audience the question, "How do you like a God like that?" It has also estranged thousands of the most cultivated people in Christendom from the Christian church. Men and women from our colleges and seminaries all over the country never go to church. In many of the most cultivated homes the Bible is never read. One reason is that these people versed in literature, more or less acquainted with Egyptology and Assyriology, and supposing that the Christian church still clings to the conception of fifty years ago, believe that Christian ministers are belated and the Christian church is a fossil. It is high time, therefore, that it be shouted from the housetops that the doctrine of verbal inspiration is dead. The Christian church does not teach it. The Christian church does not believe it.

Let us now consider the gains of the new conception. At first it seemed as though we had lost everything. So it seemed to the good people who were first told that the earth moves. It seemed to introduce an element of uncertainty into all life. According to the old conception the earth rests on the back of an elephant, the elephant stands on a tortoise, the tortoise swims on a sea. That seemed substantial. Men shuddered as they thought of the earth hanging on nothing. Calvin brought out the ninety-third psalm and proved that Copernicus was wrong. "The world also is stablished, that

it cannot be moved." But we who live to-day feel more secure than we should feel if the earth were resting on an elephant. The world is, indeed, established, and nothing can move it out of the orbit which God has ordained for it. It is established in motion, and in moving it is at rest.

We are now delivered from the awful fear of a conflict between science and religion. So long as we held the old conception, we never knew on going to bed what might appear in the morning paper which would unsettle the foundations of our faith. But now that we know that the Bible does not teach science, we are no longer afraid of conflict. No biologist will ever overturn the parable of the Good Samaritan, and no zoölogist will ever undermine the parable of the Prodigal Son. No astronomer will ever take the lustre from the words, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." No paleontologist will ever take from our lips, "Our Father who art in heaven." No discoverer or explorer or inventor will ever tarnish the glory of the truth that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

The Bible now is a human book. It lives and moves. It thrills, it burns. So long as it was a book dictated, it was to many as cold as starlight. It is no longer an arsenal filled with weapons with which to batter down our ecclesiastical foes. It is a living book which came up out of the hearts of living men, the blood of men is in it, the warmth

of their body is on it, men who were tempted in all points as we are, men who could slip and stumble, men who did not know everything. The world wants a human Bible just as it wants a human Jesus. The New Testament labors in season and out of season to make Jesus human. He is a baby, a boy, a young man; he is hungry, thirsty, disappointed, surprised, indignant. He asks questions, he learns, he grows. The New Testament makes it clear that Jesus was human. The Roman Catholic church took away his humanity, elevated him, made him austere, august, haughty, mighty. The result was the human heart was left hungry, and so many women began to speak to Mary, the sweet-faced, bright-eyed Jewish girl, — Jesus' mother. They spoke to her and asked her to speak to Jesus. And by and by Mary was elevated. She became less and less human — less of the Jewish girl, more of the goddess. And when at last she was enthroned in the heavens, men and women began to speak to the saints, — men and women of our flesh and of our blood, — they spoke to them and asked them to speak to Mary, that Mary might speak to Jesus. The human heart cries out for a human Saviour, and so the human heart demands a human Bible. The modern conception makes the Bible human. The prophets are doing the world more good to-day than they have ever done since they spoke their message. There are more preachers preaching

from the Hebrew prophets now than at any other time within the history of the Christian church. Higher criticism has made the prophets live. And because this is a human book, it is going to be studied by and by in all seminaries and colleges. When men learn that it was not dictated, but that it came up out of the human heart, they will want to know it.

It is a great book. The old conception did not do it justice. We now see how great it is. It has a scorn of details. It does not attempt to teach science. It teaches us God. It cares nothing for authorship; it does not tell us the names of the authors of many of the books. When it gives an author's name, it tells us nothing about him. It cares nothing for dates, the dates are all jumbled. It cares only for the supreme things. It was little men who made it a little book. It has great poetry in it. At first it seemed almost incredible that the Bible should contain poetry. Poetry to many minds seemed something frivolous, not sufficiently dignified and awful for the language of God in dealing with serious matters. And because men were not willing to admit that it had poetry in it, they got themselves and the church into no end of trouble. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." That has the genuine Shakespearian swing and sweep. Suppose you should make prose out of it, and ask, How can the stars fight? — would they use bows and arrows, or

Mauser rifles? Or take this, "The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord." Turn that into prose, and ask, How can hills melt? it must have been a miracle! Or take this from the book of Joshua, "Stand still, O Sun, upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their foes." That is great poetry, quoted from an old volume of Jewish poems collected by a man named Jasher. But the mediæval church takes that beautiful poem, crushes it into prose, and the Pope and cardinals order Galileo, who has discovered that the sun cannot stand still, to come from Florence to Rome and to get down on his knees and say this, "I, Galileo, being in my seventieth year, and being a prisoner and on my knees and before your eminences, having before my eyes the holy gospel which I touch, abjure, curse, and detest the error and the heresy of the movement of the earth." The old man was a coward; but do not blame him too severely, for he felt on his cheek the heat of the flames which had burned Bruno only thirty-three years before. Oh, the tragedy of it! The church of God acting the fool like that! And all because it could not distinguish poetry from prose.

Everybody nowadays admits that there is poetry in the Bible, but is there also fiction? Many persons would at once say, No, how could there be such a thing as fiction in the word of God? Fiction

deals with that which has never been. Surely it would be unworthy a place in the religious guide book of the world! Now the only way to tell whether there is fiction in the Bible or not is to read the Bible.

When we open the Bible to the book of Job, we read the story of a man who was very rich. He had seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels and five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses and seven sons and three daughters. His wealth was complete. On a certain day a man comes rushing in, saying that the oxen and asses have been carried off by the Sabeans, and that he alone has escaped to bring the news. Before he has finished another man rushes in, announcing that the lightning has struck and burned up all the sheep and all the servants except himself only. Before he has finished another man rushes in, saying that all the camels have been carried off and all the servants save himself alone. And while this man is yet speaking another man comes in and says that all Job's sons and all his daughters have been killed. Does not that sound like fiction? At the close of the book we read that because Job did that which was right in the eyes of God, he had fourteen thousand sheep instead of seven thousand, six thousand camels instead of three thousand, one thousand yoke of oxen and one thousand she-asses instead of five hundred. In other words, because he had

been good his wealth was exactly doubled. This sounds like fiction. Why not call it fiction?

We open the Bible again at the book of Jonah. Jonah is a prophet, and he is ordered to go and preach repentance to the people of Nineveh. Instead of going east, he goes directly west. A storm comes up at sea, the superstitious sailors throw him overboard and he is swallowed by a fish. In the belly of the fish the runaway prophet writes a finished poem. When he gets on land he makes his way to Nineveh, a city containing at least seven hundred thousand people, and in the streets of this city this wandering Jew shouts: "Repent! Repent! Repent!" The king of Nineveh hears him and puts on sackcloth and sits down in ashes. Every member of the court does the same, every man and every woman in Nineveh does the same. They even put sackcloth on their horses and their cows to show that the repentance of the city is complete. But Jonah is disgusted because the city has repented. God causes a gourd to grow up over the prophet's head. It grows up in a night, and God destroys it in the morning. Jonah, the man who would not pity Nineveh, has great pity on the gourd. That sounds like fiction. Well, why not call it fiction?

Somebody says, That would not be right, for the book is sober history. How do you know it is? Who says it is history? The Bible never says so. The book of Jonah itself does not say so. Christ

never said so. Some man said so, and some other man repeated what he said; but it is only a tradition of men. It was a long time before many Christians would allow a novel to come into their home. It will be a long time before all Christians will be willing to admit fiction into the Bible. Nevertheless it is there. Some one says, "Would God use fiction?" Indeed he would.

If a vote should be taken among Christian people on the question as to what book should be added to the Scriptures if any addition could be made, a large majority would undoubtedly vote in favor of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," which is fiction pure and simple from beginning to end. God has used that work of Bunyan's in a most marvellous way. He made use of the novels of Dickens to bring about great reforms in England. He has used "Black Beauty" to create tenderness for animals. If he uses fiction among Englishmen and Americans, why should he never have used fiction among the Jews?

But some one says that Jesus quoted this book as history. How do you know he did? He quoted it, but by his quotation we are not driven to infer that it is history. Every religious teacher draws his illustrations from books of poetry and from books of fiction as well as from books of history. I am constantly taking my illustrations from Shakespeare. Cordelia and King Lear, Rosalind and Jaques, Portia and Shylock, Romeo and Juliet,

Othello and Desdemona — these are among my dearest friends. I quote their words just as I should quote the words of historic people. I should not hesitate to say in a sermon that "Just as the witches in 'Macbeth' poured various ingredients into a cauldron in order to form a hellish broth, so do evil spirits throw wicked thoughts and wicked feelings into human hearts, causing a hell broth to boil and bubble there." I hope no man would go away and say, "That minister is superstitious, he believes in witches." Now if you allow me, a religious teacher living in the twentieth century, to draw my illustrations from fiction, why not give Jesus of Nazareth the same privilege?

There is a further question, Is there such a thing as a myth in the Bible? Some one may hold up his hands in horror at this and say: "Now, please don't! It is bad enough to have poetry and fiction in the Bible; but if you make out that a part of the Scriptures is myth, then the sacred book must go." Let us see in the first place what a myth is. Some people do not know. They think that a myth is a lie. A myth is nothing but a story that has come down from an immemorial past. It is a story, the author of which is unknown, the origin of which no one can ascertain. Are there any such stories in the Bible? We cannot tell by theorizing, we must read the Bible and find out. We open the big book, and on the very first page of it we read that God created the earth and the

heavens in six days, and then rested. That sounds like a story. It will not do to say that he created the world in six ages, for the word "day" does not mean age — it means a day of twenty-four hours. The Bible at the very beginning asserts that the heavens and the earth and man were all created inside of a week. We turn the page and we read of the creation of woman. The man falls asleep, God takes a rib from his side, and out of this rib creates a woman. That sounds like a story. In the third chapter we read of God walking in a garden in the cool of the day. A man and a woman have done wrong. They hide themselves. A snake has been talking to them. It all sounds like a story. If we should meet with it anywhere else, we should know it was a story. Why, then, if we find it in the Bible should we say that it is science or that it is history? Some one may say, "But would God use a story?" Indeed he would — at least he does.

Mothers are the great story-tellers of the world. They feed their children upon stories. A child loves nothing else so much as a story. "Tell me another one, mother!" The child will listen until the mother grows weary. "If you will be good, to-morrow I will tell you another story." It is the greatest reward that a child can have. The story-telling power is built up in mothers in order to meet the story hunger in the child heart. Now all this is of God. And if God allows mothers to

bring up their children on stories, I do not think he would hesitate to use stories himself in the training of a world.

And who are we, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, that we should have such an antipathy to stories? Jesus was always telling stories, and that is why men and women hung upon his words. He knew how to reach and hold the child which is in every man. One day a crowd surrounds him, eager for more stories, and so he begins: "A certain man had a hundred sheep. One of them gets away, and the shepherd brings it back. Then he calls his neighbors to rejoice with him because the lost sheep is found."—"Tell us another one," the people said. "A certain woman had ten pieces of silver, and she lost one of them. She got out her broom and lit her candle and looked the house over until she found it, and then she called in her neighbors to rejoice with her."—"Tell us another one."—"A certain man had two sons. The younger of them said, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me, and not long afterward the son went into a far country." If there are stories in the New Testament, why should we be scandalized by stories in the Old? Surely we shall not object to stories simply because they are old. In other words, why should we be so hostile to myths? A myth is as good as a parable, and both of them can be used to the glory of God.

We are now ready to answer certain questions.

Is the Bible God's word? That is not a good title for the Bible. When you call sixty-six books the word of God, you say something which is open to serious objection, and which leads to countless misunderstandings. God's word is in the Bible; but many things in the Bible are not God's word. The lie told by the serpent, the foolishness spoken by Job's friends, the cry of Jeremiah, "O Lord God, thou hast deceived me!" — these and much else are not the word of God. Jesus Christ is the word of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And it is this word which speaks softly and intermittently in the Old Testament, more clearly and more gloriously in the New. We see gleams of it in the prophets and in the psalms; it blazes out in the gospels.

Is it right to say that God wrote the Bible? No, he did not write it. Every page of it was written by human fingers. The Bible was written by man. The lights and the shadows of his moods, the depression and rapture of his spirit, play over its pages. Its contents came up out of the cavernous depths of the human heart. The light that lights every man that comes into the world came up out of the heart. In the Bible we see how this light struggles with human ignorance and sin, until at last it comes out victorious in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Are we to believe when a Bible writer says, "Thus saith the Lord,"

that he is accurately reporting in every case something which God actually said? No. The Hebrews, like all other men, sometimes misunderstood God. Even the greatest of the apostles does not hesitate to say, "We see through a glass darkly." If a man who has seen Jesus of Nazareth near the Damascus gate speaks of seeing through a glass darkly, surely it is not unfair to men who lived a thousand years before Jesus came, to say that they also saw through a glass darkly. How are we to know then whether the Lord said a thing or not? We can tell only by bringing it and reading it in the light of Jesus of Nazareth. He is the image of God, and everything in the Old Testament must square with his disposition and temper. On a certain occasion John wanted to call down fire upon some Samaritans. He wanted to follow the example of Elijah. Jesus reprimanded him thus, "You know not what spirit you are of."

Is the Bible infallible? I should not use that word. It is too pretentious a word for men like us to use. It is better to say that the Bible is useful. It was written by honest men. It does not deceive. If you say that a book can be trustworthy even though it has errors in it, you make no mistake. Our senses are trustworthy, nevertheless our eyes occasionally deceive us. So also do our ears. But it is true none the less that our senses are trustworthy, and we are willing to rely upon them every day of the week. There are slight errors in

the Scriptures, but the Scriptures can be trusted. Men are trustworthy, although they are not infallible. I know men whom I would trust to the end of the day, but I do not know a man who has not erred and who may not err again. Why not be more modest and be content with the language of Scripture?

Paul does not claim that the Bible is infallible. He says, "Every scripture inspired of God is profitable." That is, it is useful. What a contrast that is to the language which we use! If you say that the Bible is infallible, somebody will begin to offer objections, and he may trip you. But if you say that the Bible is useful, no one can successfully deny that. Paul does not say it is useful for everything. He carefully defines the field inside of which the Bible is of use. He says it is useful for teaching, for correction, for rebuke, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, completely furnished for every good work. It is best to use the language of Scripture. In the words of the writer to the Hebrews, "God in old time spoke to the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners." Sometimes the portion was very small, at other times it was larger. In some pages there is very little bread to eat, in other pages there is bread and to spare.

Is the Bible inspired? It is. How do we know? Because it inspires. These writings are the most

inspiring writings in the world. How could they inspire if they were not inspired? It is not necessary to prove their inspiration by picking out isolated texts. Let us come out under the open sky, and unroll history before us, and see the world as one vast plain. See the wondrous panorama! Behold the different nations, tribes, and peoples living their busy lives, building cities, carrying on trade, formulating philosophies, worshipping at altars. And there, in the midst of the busy picture, is a Semitic tribe which for some reason has an idea that it is intrusted with a mission. It believes that through it all the nations of the earth are to be blest. In some way it has got the idea that God is righteous, and that man must be like him, and that character is the one supreme thing of value upon earth. In customs and manners, in institutions and language, this tribe is very much like the tribes by which it is surrounded. There are endless resemblances and similarities, but this tribe, for some reason, holds itself aloof from the other tribes, and pushes its way up against nature worship, against polytheism, against the countless abominations which drift in upon it from the surrounding countries. When it receives a story from a neighboring tribe, it cleanses it. Century after century this tribe holds itself aloof, consecrates itself to a set of ideas, clings to the belief that a covenant has been made between it and the Almighty. I call this inspira-

tion. In its religion there are many things which remind one of the religions of the surrounding peoples, but every religion of every other people is tainted. The religion of this tribe is never tainted. This tribe is limited in knowledge; it is often crude in its conceptions, immature in its virtues and graces, but its temple is never polluted. The centre is always kept clean. That is inspiration. And more than this, this tribe has a genius for hoping. It projects upon the clouds of the future an ideal figure. Over the head of every king it sees the head of a better king, and over the head of every prophet it sees the features of a greater prophet. Generation after generation the eyes of its great men discern the face of one who is to overtop Moses and the kings. This must be inspiration. Century after century the men of this tribe have comforted one another by saying: "Some day, some time, it will be well." And lo! one morning there is a new babe in Bethlehem. Is the Bible inspired? Of course it is. By their fruits you shall know them. The Bible lies at the foundation of the Christian world. Compare the Christian world with the Mohammedan world or the Confucian. Lay England by the side of Turkey. Lay Germany by the side of India. Lay the United States by the side of China. A book must be inspired that inspires nations to live nearer to God.

Is the Bible unique? Is it different from all other books that have ever been? It is. Inspira-

tion was not confined, of course, to the Jews. God has access to every heart. But no other tribe ever took God in as the Hebrew people did. There have been isolated mountain peaks in Asia, but see this long mountain range culminating in Jesus of Nazareth. Men may quibble about this text or the other text, but there is no disputing the rise and the moral supremacy of the Hebrew people. This thing was not done in a corner. There has been a mighty historical movement, and out of this historical movement there has come a glorious revelation of the character and purposes of the Almighty. If God has not spoken in this movement, he has never spoken at all. It is only people who do not know the other Bibles of the world who place them on a level with our own. Max Müller, professor of Sanscrit at Oxford University, edited the sacred books of the East, and in his Preface he says, "Readers who have been led to believe that the sacred books of the East are full of primeval wisdom and religious enthusiasm, will be disappointed on consulting these volumes." And Professor Monier Williams, another of the greatest of Oriental scholars, says, "Place the sacred writings of non-Christian systems on the left side of your study table, but place your own Holy Bible on the right side, all by itself, all alone, with a wide gap between." Sir Walter Scott was right when he said to Lockhart in his dying hour, "There is but one book, the Bible."

VI

THE DEITY OF JESUS. — PART I

VI

THE DEITY OF JESUS.—PART I

"Who do men say that the Son of man is? Who say ye that I am?"—Matthew xvi: 13, 15.

IT was near the city of Cæsarea Philippi, in the northern part of Palestine, in the midst of a pagan population, in some secluded spot far removed from the curious eyes of the Scribes and the hostile ears of the Pharisees that Jesus propounded to the twelve men who had been with him from the beginning this surprising question, "Who do men say that I am?" Simon Peter, who always acted as spokesman for his brethen, gave in substance this reply, "Men are not agreed in their opinion concerning you; some say one thing, and some say another. But they are all agreed on one point, they all say you are a great man, worthy to be ranked among the very greatest of the prophets." And the answer fell like a shadow across the Master's face. And then, looking earnestly into the eyes of the Twelve he put this question, "Who say ye that I am?" And again it was Simon Peter who made the reply, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And the answer fell like a sunbeam across the Master's

face. "Blessed art thou, Simon, out of men like you I will build my church, and the forces of destruction will never overcome it."

From the day of this conference at Cæsarea Philippi down to the present day there have never been in this world but two opinions concerning Jesus of Nazareth. It seems, I know, that there have been hundreds of different conceptions of his person, but all these hundreds can be reduced to two. According to one opinion, Jesus is a man, a great man, truly wonderful, but only a man, a bright and shining light like John the Baptist, a sensitive and tender-hearted patriot and martyr like Jeremiah, an intrepid messenger from the courts of heaven like Elijah, a beautiful Heraclitus or Socrates, a noble Seneca or Epictetus, a Palestinian Confucius or Buddha, very great and very wonderful, but still a man. According to the other opinion he is the Messiah, the desire of the nations, the consummator of history, the one who was to come, the Son of the Eternal, the only Son of God, unparalleled, unapproached, unapproachable, unique, unlike any person that has ever been, or that will ever be. These are the two conceptions of Jesus, and besides these two there is none other. Ralph Waldo Emerson held the first opinion.

"I am the owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Cæsar's hand and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart and Shakespeare's strain."

Cæsar, Plato, Jesus, Shakespeare — there they stand, all on the same level; all of them men of genius, men of power. Charles Lamb held the other opinion. "If Shakespeare should come into the room," he said, "we should rise to greet him; but if that Person should enter we should fall on our knees and kiss the hem of his garment."

From the beginning the Christian church took the higher of these two conceptions, and she has steadfastly held it to the present hour.

The lower conception is easier to grasp than the higher. It requires less thought; it lays a tax less severe upon the intellect. If Jesus of Nazareth is only a man, we can master him; if he is only a man of genius, we can understand him. We are familiar with men, and even a great man does not seriously perplex us. But if Jesus stands in a class by himself, if he combines in his nature the attributes both of God and of man, then we have upon our hands a problem. There are elements in his person apparently contradictory, opposing traits unite in him, and it becomes necessary for us to do a deal of thinking in order that we may reconcile these apparent contradictions and make clear the relations in which he stands to God and man. But a conception is not to be rejected simply because it is difficult to take it in. There is no conception of inspiration so simple and so easily grasped as the conception of verbal inspiration. If God dictated the Bible from first word to last, that is a concep-

tion so simple that a child can grasp it, and so long as a man can believe it, he will have no trouble with the Bible. He settles at a stroke all sorts of problems, and henceforth has nothing to do but to take implicitly just what is written. But if we cannot believe that the Bible is dictated, and are driven to believe that every man who wrote a part of it allowed his own personality to enter to a greater or less extent into everything he wrote, then we have a conception which is far more difficult to manage, and one which can be held only by the constant exercise of the discriminating intellect.

The lower conception is easier; but in this world we are not after easy conceptions, we are after the truth. In astronomy we never dream of taking the easier conception. The Ptolemaic theory is far simpler than the Copernican. If we start with the earth as the centre, and make the sun and the moon and the stars revolve around it, we have a conception which is so simple that nobody can misunderstand it, and moreover it is one which the senses seem to support. But if you say that the sun is the centre of the solar system, and that he himself is never still but is revolving round some other sun, which sun is revolving round still another, then you get the universe into a tangle, and who can tell how you are coming out! The Ptolemaic conception is simple. The only trouble with it is that it is not true. The astronomer never accepts anything because it is simple. He tells me that the sun is

ninety-three millions of miles away, and that the nearest sun to our sun is twenty-five billions of miles off, so that an express train starting from the earth, and travelling every day of every week of every year, would run seventy-five millions of years before it reached that distant sun. Such figures seem incredible and absurd, but the astronomer assures me that they are correct. Nor does he stop here. He tells me that he has been able to measure the distance of only about twenty-five stars, and that most of the stars which are seen in the sky are hundreds of thousands of quadrillions and quintillions of miles away.

My mind cannot comprehend such figures; but the astronomer says I must take them. If I tell him that I find the old Greek conception easier to apprehend, which supposed the sun to be only seventy-five miles away, and that the stars are brilliants tacked on the inside of a hollow sphere, he simply pushes aside those ideas saying, that if I will allow him to use his larger figures, he will explain the seasons on the earth, and the eclipses of the sun and moon and planets, and the swing of the constellations, and the brightening and the fading of the nebulæ, and will interpret almost every line of light written on the wide page of the blue night. An astronomer is never appalled by large conceptions because he knows that he is dealing with the universe of God.

It may be necessary, therefore, for us to assume the higher conception of Jesus of Nazareth in order

to explain the phenomena which must be accounted for. It may be that we must acknowledge him to be more than man in order to account for the change of climate in all the lands across which his name has been carried, and to explain the tidal movement of thought and feeling in the centuries that lie between us and his cross, and to give a reason for the fountains which have been opened in the human heart since he ascended from Olivet. Without controversy, as St. Paul said long ago, great is the mystery of godliness. And if large conceptions do not daunt an astronomer, they ought not to frighten a Christian.

The lower conception requires less time for its mastery than does the higher. If Jesus is only a man, then I can apprehend him in as short a time as would be necessary for the apprehension of any other man of similar magnitude. It does not take one long to master the biography of even the greatest man. A few years of study will acquaint us sufficiently with the track of his orbit, and we shall come to know quite thoroughly the trend of his thought and the temper of his heart. But if Jesus is unique, the only Son of the living God, then I need not expect to apprehend him either to-day or to-morrow or the day after. This need not appall me, for suppose that the supreme object of human life is the apprehension of the person of Jesus, and suppose that the glory of eternity is the growing into his likeness and the appreciation of

his nature. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, says that he has but one ambition, and that he counts all things loss in order that he may know Jesus and the power of his resurrection. And in his letter to the Ephesians he says that he has but one prayer for his converts, and that is that they may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Any one, therefore, who wishes to hold the higher conception of Jesus, should be willing to give time. Patience is indispensable. Many men have thrown away the higher conception and taken the lower for no other reason than that they were unwilling to wait until they grew into the conception which Peter held at Cæsarea Philippi. Men sometimes say, "I believe in the humanity of Jesus," and they say it in a tone which means, "I do not propose to go any farther, I have settled the whole problem — Jesus was nothing but a man!" When we hear a man say, "I believe in the *humanity* of Jesus," our reply should be, "I am glad you do. You ought to believe in it. That is the place to start.

"'If Christ is a man,
And only a man, I say,
That of all mankind I will cleave to him,
And to him will I cleave alway.'"

That is where the apostles started. They did not believe in the deity of Jesus at first. It was only by the growth of years that they came at last to see that he transcended the limits of humanity.

And the gospels steadfastly hold the humanity of Jesus in the foreground. His divinity is always in the background. They present him to us as a man who was born and grew, and was hungry, weak, tempted, surprised, indignant, hurt, wounded, killed, and buried. It is through his humanity we must make our way to his deity. If there is a young man here this morning who is not yet able to see the reasonableness of the church's teaching concerning the person of Jesus, let me say to him: Be patient. Do not throw away the higher conception as absurd. Take the lower conception, and go on. Learn more and more of this person who you say is a man. Give yourself more and more unreservedly to his teachings. Obey more and more completely his commandments — and who knows but that you will some day say with Peter, "Thou art the Messiah," and exclaim with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God."

The lower conception requires less spiritual preparedness than does the higher. There are many things which can be seen without any spiritual preparation whatsoever. Some things can be told and told easily. I can tell a man how to go to the Battery from Bryant Park; I can tell a man how to make sulphuric acid; I can tell a man when Shakespeare was born, and when Luther died, and when Lincoln freed the slaves; but there are some things that cannot be told. I cannot tell a man beauty; a man must see beauty for

himself. I cannot tell a man music; he must hear it for himself. I cannot tell a man love; he must love before he knows what love is. Neither can I tell any man the deity of Jesus. Every man must find that out for himself. Jesus never told his disciples he was divine. He said, "Come to me. Follow me. Watch me. Do the things I tell you to do." And after they had been with him many months he said, "Who do you say I am?" And when Peter told him he was sure he was the Son of God, Jesus replied, saying, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven," which means, "No man has told you this; it has been revealed to you from within."

Paul is also equally emphatic in asserting his conviction that the deity of Jesus can be discerned only by the spiritual heart. No man, he says, can call Jesus Lord, except in the Holy Ghost. In his letter to the Corinthians he writes, "The natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And again and again we find Paul asserting that the gospel which he preached had not been told him by anybody; it all came as a revelation made to him in his own heart. As he himself expresses it, it pleased God to reveal his Son in him. Therefore the deity of Jesus is a truth which cannot be demonstrated to a man whose heart is not right toward God. If a man is wilful or vain or insincere or

immoral, — if he is habitually breaking the law of God at any point, — he cannot see the deity of Jesus, nor will he be able to believe with his heart that the Son of God has really come. The first thing for that man to do is to repent. The New Testament informs us that Jesus began his ministry just as John the Baptist began his, by preaching the duty of repentance. And the beloved disciple says that this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and that men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. If, therefore, men settle back and say, "Prove to me that Jesus is divine," — supposing that it can be proved like a proposition in Euclid or an experiment in chemistry or a case in law, — they must be told that spiritual demonstrations are impossible save to the humble and the contrite heart.

Not only is the lower conception of Jesus more easily grasped by the intellect and more congenial to the unspiritual heart, but there are many plausible arguments which may be brought forward in its support. There is much in the spirit of the present age which makes it a satisfactory and even fascinating conception to large numbers of men. Ever since the publication of Strauss's "Life of Jesus," nearly seventy years ago, there has been an incessant battle raging round the person of Jesus. Scholars on both sides the sea in large numbers have endeavored to make it clear that Jesus of Nazareth was nothing but a man, and that

all the New Testament stories which make him out more than a man are nothing but the poetry which has gathered round a simple and beautiful peasant life. These men have brought to their work great mental acumen, all the resources of scholarship, and all the graces of literary style. Their arguments are so plausible it is not surprising that thousands should have been captured by them. The rising generation cannot fail to be influenced by the teaching of this school of thought. Nor can the Christian church entirely escape the demoralizing influences which proceed from men who persist in classing Jesus among the prophets. There are many members of the Christian church who are all at sea in regard to the one doctrine of our faith which is cardinal and which includes all others.

There is need, therefore, that we should ask ourselves why it is that the Christian church holds the higher conception? The world is ready with its answer. When Jesus asks it, "Who do you say I am?" it promptly replies, "A man." When he says to us, "Who do ye say that I am?" we ought to be able to say with the promptness and assurance of Simon Peter, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And we ought to be able to give an answer to every one who asks for a reason for the hope that is within us. Let us then sit down in the presence of three facts. I do not ask you to speculate or to dream, but simply to

face facts. Those who imagine that the deity of Jesus is a matter of philosophy or metaphysics do greatly err. The reasons for thinking him divine are not the product of philosophic thought, but are solid and colossal facts which even a wayfaring man can see.

Let me ask you, then, to free your mind from presuppositions and prejudices and biases and fancies, and become clear-eyed observers. Dr. Johnson used to say to Boswell, "Clear your mind of cant." Let me address to you the same exhortation, Clear your mind of cant. There are many varieties of it, all of them mischievous and hateful. There is religious cant, society cant, literary cant, philosophical cant, professional cant — clear your mind of cant and become an honest observer. It is not so easy as you think. We are ruled largely by our imaginations and our speculations. If you would believe in the deity of Jesus, lay aside your presuppositions and simply look.

The first fact to which I invite your attention is the New Testament. There is no doubt it exists, nor is there any doubt that it has existed for nearly two thousand years. It does not matter to us this morning who wrote it or why it was written. We shall take it simply as a fact. On glancing through it we see that it contains twenty-seven pieces of writing, four of them biographies, twenty-one of them letters, one a piece of history, and the other a piece of prophecy. These twenty-seven pieces

of writing were written by nine men, and all the nine men are writing about one person. They unite in painting a portrait — the most wonderful portrait ever painted. This book tells us about a life which began with one miracle and ended with another. It says that between the beginning miracle and the ending miracle there was a series of miracles. It reports many words which this man said. The words are even more wonderful than his deeds. They sound wonderful to us, they sounded just as wonderful to the men who heard them first. The men of the first century were astounded at his teaching. Sometimes they marvelled, and sometimes they gnashed their teeth in rage. Even those who disliked the speaker most, were obliged to confess that never man so spake. When we take his words and study them, two things become at once quite clear. This person makes tremendous claims upon the minds and hearts of men. He says, "Come to me! Follow me! Abide in me!" In the presence of death he gave his disciples a ceremony, saying, "Do this in remembrance of me." Wherever he went he was in search of disciples. When he found men willing to become his disciples, he insisted that they should place him first in their affections. "If you love father or mother or wife or child more than me, you are not worthy of me." He sent his disciples out to face danger and possible death; but he said that death incurred for his sake was not terrible, but glorious.

Among the men who were his dearest friends he always acted as a king. Nothing short of absolute obedience was satisfying to him. "You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you." "Why do you call me Lord, if you do not the things that I say?" "If you know these things, happy are you if you do them." The only reason he was able to lay such imperial claims upon the consciences and lives of others was because of the conception which he entertained of himself. He lifted himself above everybody and everything, and yet he said that he was meek and lowly of heart.

He lifted himself above the Scriptures. The Scriptures in Jesus' day were idolized by the religious leaders of the people. Jesus said, "It is written, but I say . . . It is written, but I say . . . It is written, but I say . . ." No wonder people were astonished at his doctrine, and said he taught as one having authority. He lifted himself above the most sacred institutions of his nation. He placed himself above the Sabbath — "the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath." He exalted himself above the temple — "A greater than the temple is here." "No two stones of this temple will be left standing one upon the other, but destroy this temple of my body and I will raise it in three days." He set himself above all men that were living then or that had ever lived, or that ever would live. He placed himself above Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people. "Before Abraham was, I am."

He lifted himself above Solomon, the wisest Hebrew that had ever lived. "A greater than Solomon is here." He claimed to be preëxistent. "I came down from heaven." "What if you see the Son of man ascending to where he was before." To Nicodemus, at night, he said, "I have descended out of heaven." And in his last prayer for his disciples, in the upper room, he said, "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." He claimed to be sinless. "Which one of you" he said to the religious leaders of his day, "convicteth me of sin?"

He never betrayed the slightest consciousness of wrong-doing. All the other characters in the Bible confess themselves sinners. From Moses down to Paul they all use the same language. "Who am I?" "Woe is me." "I abhor myself." "O wretched man that I am!" "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." He told his disciples that when they prayed they should say, "Father, forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." But he never offered that prayer himself. Not only did he claim to be sinless, but other men felt his sinlessness and acknowledged it. "Depart from me," cried Peter, "for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Even Judas in the torments of remorse cried out, "I have betrayed innocent blood." Jesus is the only person in history who is able to stand up and say, "I do always those things which are pleasing unto him."

And so Jesus placed himself in a class by himself. He would not admit that he and his countrymen belonged to the same class of beings. "I am from above," he said; "you are from below. You are of this world; I am not of this world. No man knows the Father but the Son and he to whomsoever the Son is willing to reveal him." He told his disciples that when they prayed they should say, "Our Father," but he never used the pronoun "our" in addressing God. He never prayed with his disciples, he prayed apart. After his resurrection he said to Mary, "Go, tell my brethren that I ascend to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God." Why did he not say, "I ascend to our Father?" Because he is in a class apart. His relation to God is different from that sustained by any other character in history.

And if he is unique in the days of his incarnation, he is to be unique forever. After the days of his flesh are over, he is to be all-powerful. All authority is given unto him, in heaven and on earth. He is to be omnipresent. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." He is to be Judge. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, and then will I say, I never knew you. Depart." "The Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate the one from the other as the shepherd divideth the sheep from the

goats." And since all this is true he does not hesitate to say that he is to be an object of worship. "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him." That is the gist of the New Testament.

The man who laid the foundations of the Christian church in Asia Minor and in Europe took Jesus Christ at his word, and believed that he was all that he said he was. Paul in his letter to the Colossians says that Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the first born of the whole creation, and that by him were all things created that are in heaven and are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him; and he is above all things, and by him all things consist, that he is the head of the body, the church. And in his letter to the Ephesians he says that "God has placed Christ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church." And in his letter to the Philippians he says that Christ Jesus was in the form of God, but thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every

tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Now what will you do with this fact? You may do any one of three different things. You may say that the portrait is a correct likeness of a person who lived and worked upon this earth. This is what the Christian church has always said. Or you may say that the portrait is a cheat, that Jesus of Nazareth was either a rogue, or that the disciples were tricksters, and that the religion which they foisted upon the world is a sham. That is what many sceptics of the eighteenth century said. But to say that now is considered very coarse and very vulgar. The third thing to do is to cut out of the portrait those features which do not appeal to you, and take only that part of it which lies within the range of ordinary human experience. A man is of course at liberty to do either one or the other of these three things; but if he does the third thing, he ought to understand at the beginning that if one begins to cut the New Testament portrait of Christ, it is exceedingly difficult to know where to stop, because the miraculous element is so interwoven with every part of his life that to cut out this miraculous element is to leave the gospels a mass of shreds. The supernatural runs in the blood of the New Testament, and to get rid of it the blood of the New Testament must be drawn out. It is an aroma which enfolds it like an enveloping atmosphere.

"You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will cling round it still."

In the second place, one should bear in mind that if he cuts the portrait of Christ, his action is not warranted by any external evidence whatsoever, but is prompted by certain presuppositions existing in his own mind. These presuppositions may be whims, or they may be prejudices, or they may be hypotheses, or they may be the product of his own mental constitution wrought upon by the spirit of the age. A man who cuts out of the New Testament the miraculous element has no justification for so doing outside of himself. Not one scrap of evidence has been brought to light within the last hundred years, either out of the earth, or from the monuments, or from the shelves of old libraries; not one single fact has been discovered by the telescope, or by the microscope, or by the spectroscope, or any other instrument of science; not one scintilla of evidence has been found either in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, to invalidate the historic integrity of a single paragraph of the gospels as they appear in our Revised Version of the New Testament.

It should be further borne in mind that the man who cuts the New Testament according to his own liking, has no right to put on airs and assume that he is thoughtful above all others, or that he has a more disinterested love of truth. Men who cut the

New Testament sometimes are labelled "advanced thinkers." A more humble epithet would seem to be appropriate, for your child can cut out of the best book in your house all the pictures in it, and it can do this without mental exertion, and in an incredibly short space of time. A man can cut out of the New Testament all of its most beautiful passages, and still be a dull-witted man and a mere tyro in scholarship. A man has no right to give himself a title, the plain implication of which is, that the man who does not follow him is a belated numskull. To cut out of the New Testament those elements which have made the book a power in the history of the world, is by no means, then, conclusive proof of extraordinary intellectual acumen, nor an indisputable indication that the man is possessed of a rare and vigorous scientific habit of mind. Least of all does it prove that he is an "advanced thinker." Why should a man be called "advanced" who has not advanced an inch beyond the position held by the Palestinian crowd nearly nineteen centuries ago?

VII

THE DEITY OF JESUS.—PART II

VII

THE DEITY OF JESUS. — PART II

"Who do men say that the Son of man is? Who say ye that I am?"—Matthew 16: 13, 15.

WE are now ready for our second fact. The New Testament portrait is not sufficient. If the New Testament were the only fact which Christians have in their possession, it would be impossible for us to maintain our belief in the deity of Jesus Christ. The New Testament taken by itself is an incredible book. I could not accept the gospel story as genuine history if that history were not supplemented by something which has taken place since Jesus died on the cross. No book of any sort, even though it be the New Testament itself, is substantial enough to hold up such an imposing edifice as belief in the deity of Christ. There are many minds in our day to whom the New Testament is no proof whatsoever. Such minds would not be affected in the least by anything which I said a week ago. That sermon did not reach the root of the trouble. There is no doubt the portrait exists; but the fact to be proved

is whether or not the portrait is an accurate likeness of any person that ever lived on this planet.

Men are increasingly suspicious of all beautiful stories of every sort in the history and literature of nations, and especially is the modern mind distrustful of documents which contain a miraculous element. The speculations of Strauss and Renan have passed into the air like fine dust, and all of us take more or less of that dust into our mental lungs. Men tell us it is not surprising that we should find miracles in the New Testament, for we find them everywhere else. There is scarcely a great name in history around which miraculous stories have not been woven, and in every case such stories are to be accounted for in the same manner. They are nothing but embellishments created by the imagination. The miraculous stories in the gospels are only the ivy which has grown up around a few simple facts in a beautiful Galilean life. The ivy in Palestine is precisely like the ivy in other fields. And as for the exalted language which the apostles are represented as having used concerning Jesus, that, too, is only like the language which is found elsewhere. Palestine is not the only country which has indulged in the luxury of apotheosis.

The deification of man has been common in human history. Three thousand years before Jesus came, an Egyptian Pharaoh claimed to be the incarnation of the Eternal God, and his subjects took him at his word. The same idea sprang up among

the Babylonians, and among the Persians, and among the Indians, and later on among the Greeks. Was not Alexander the Great after his death worshipped as a god? and did not the Romans, following the example of the Greeks, deify more than one of their heroes? Did not the Senate proclaim that Julius Cæsar was a god, and for that reason no image should be made of him? And did not the Roman populace believe that the comet which flashed out in the sky soon after Cæsar's death, was evidence of the fact that he had been admitted into the council of the gods?

Apotheosis, then, men say, in the New Testament, is only what it is outside of the New Testament, and in every case it is a delusion. And so our belief in the deity of Jesus would be untenable if we did not have in our possession something more than the New Testament. The portrait of Jesus is one fact, we must have another. The second fact at which I now ask you to look is the Christian church, a living, growing church with a history. This is our second proof of the deity of Jesus. It is doubtful if God ever intended that a book should be made the primary proof of the deity of the founder of the Christian religion.

The New Testament is indeed an invaluable book. It has its place, and when it is properly used it is of enormous value; but when we put it into the wrong place, it causes immeasurable mischief. It was never intended to be the sole

defence of our faith, nor is it the deepest rock on which we are to build the greatest of our doctrines. The printed page is not sufficiently strong to hold up the immense weight of a world-conquering religion. That God never intended a book to be the chief and the sole defence of our faith is evidenced by the following facts: Jesus never wrote a line himself, and so far as we know he never told his disciples to write down upon paper a single sentence which he ever spoke. Not one of the disciples, so far as we know, wrote down during the Master's lifetime one of his discourses, or an account of one of his miracles or deeds. There were shorthand reporters in Palestine in Jesus' day, for they existed wherever the Roman Empire unfurled her standards. But so far as history tells us, no Roman shorthand writer ever took down a single sentence which fell from Jesus' lips.

Jesus left eleven apostles to continue his work in the world, but only two of these, so far as we know, ever thought it worth their while to put down on paper even a brief account of their Master's life. A man in the fourth century says that a man in the second century says that Matthew wrote down in Hebrew some of the things which Jesus said. That Hebrew gospel vanished early, and how much of our first gospel can be attributed to Matthew, no scholar is able to declare. The only other of the apostles who is said to have written a life of Jesus is John. But according to tradition he

did not write his gospel until fifty or sixty years after Jesus' death, so that his gospel is unlike the other three. The peculiar atmosphere which hangs about it is due to the fact that we see Jesus through the mind of John.

It does not look as though the apostles felt that the sole defence of the Christian religion must be a book. Saul of Tarsus was a scholar and a master of language, but so far as we know he did not write a line for a dozen years after his conversion, and even then he would not have written anything if he had not been compelled to do so. He was an itinerant preacher passing from city to city, and after his departure his converts sometimes got into trouble. They were harassed by enemies without, and tormented by fears within, and in order to comfort and direct them, the apostle sent back, from time to time, a brief epistle. Some of his letters have been lost, only thirteen of them have been saved. Paul did not imagine that any of them would be preserved nineteen hundred years. He never dreamed that anything he wrote would be bound up some day in a book along with the Psalms, nor did he once imagine that men on the Lord's day in Christian churches throughout the world would refer to his letters as freely as they refer to Moses and Isaiah.

In short, there is no reason for thinking that any one of the men who wrote the writings which have been gathered into our New Testament had the

faintest conception that he was making a contribution to a book which would become the defence of the Christian faith. These writings existed separately for a long time. Little by little they came together in apparently the most haphazard and accidental manner. Indeed, the gradual growth of the canon of the New Testament is one of the most fascinating as well as one of the most surprising pages of Christian history.

Why did not these men see the importance of creating and preserving a book? Why did they not write the New Testament at once, and write it in such a manner that all the world might be absolutely certain of the authorship of each book? The answer is that the apostles had no time to write the New Testament, they were too busy in building a church. They were like the Master himself, he never wrote a book. He gave his time and strength to the building of a church. The church is to be the pillar and the ground of the truth. A book cannot hold up anything. Only a living institution is sufficient for great things. The Christian church is the argument which the Christian man must present to unbelievers, and the defenders of our faith who have best known how to present their cause have, from the first century downward, dwelt not upon isolated texts written down in a book, but have pointed with confidence to a mighty institution, an indubitable monument to the greatness of our Lord.

Listen to one of the great preachers of the early church, Justin, saying, about the year 150, "There is not one single race of men, whether barbarians or Greeks, or whatever they may be called, nomads or vagrants, or herdsmen dwelling in tents among whom prayers and giving of thanks are not offered through the name of the crucified Jesus." What unceasing, enthusiastic, mighty work must have been done to make such a declaration as that possible one hundred and twenty years after Jesus' death! Or listen to Tertullian a few years later. He is addressing a Roman official. "We are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you, cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camps, your tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum; we leave you your temples only."

The early Christian preachers did not travel from land to land holding their finger nervously on a text, saying, "Christ is the Son of God because it is written so in this holy book." They pointed to an institution which had been created by allegiance to his name. The growth of the early church is one of the most wonderful phenomena in history. It grew more rapidly than the historians of an earlier day imagined. The figures of Gibbon have been pulverized and blown to the winds by the researches of recent scholarship.

We make a mistake, then, whenever we create the impression that belief in the deity of Jesus is

a matter of proof texts. By creating such an impression we make Christianity seem technical and petty. Conscientious people become bewildered. They go to hear preachers preach, and one man says one thing and the second man says the opposite; they do not know which one of the two is right. They then go into a library and begin to read; but what is a library but a Tower of Babel, a great hubbub of conflicting voices? The first book they read says one thing, the second book says something else, the third book contradicts both the others. The ordinary man turned loose in a great library of several hundred thousand volumes is simply swamped. In order to use books aright a man must grow up with them from his cradle.

But certainly Christianity is not a thing intended primarily and chiefly for scholars; it is for the plain man who has had no opportunity to go to school and has little time for reading. If Christianity is to be proved from a book, then one can become confused by the variations and the discrepancies and the redactions and the interpolations: these are the things which make the mind sick. If a man is conscientious, he becomes hopelessly bewildered. If you make Christianity a thing that can be proved by a certain manipulation of a few sentences taken from a book, the men who are not so conscientious will simply pass by on the other side; they will say, "The whole

subject is too deep for me; let people investigate it who like that sort of thing; as for me, I will do the best I can and take the consequences!"

Christianity is not altogether dependent on a book. The religion of Christ is not to be proved by the dexterous manipulation of scattered sentences. Whenever you become bewildered by the conflicting voices of printed books, throw the books away, and get out under God's great broad sky, and let your eyes sweep across the centuries. It is true that Jesus cuts a large figure in the New Testament; but if that were the only place on earth where his figure was colossal, we should make short work of him — we should relegate him to a place among the heroes of fiction. But he cuts a still larger figure in human history. He walks down the centuries with the tread of a conqueror. Nearly nineteen hundred years have passed since he died upon the cross, and in all these centuries he has been lifting empires off their hinges, and turning the stream of history into new channels. Emerson is right when he says that his name is ploughed into the world. Renan is right when he says that his life has been made a corner-stone in the building of our race. Lecky is right when he says the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists.

Christ in history! There is a fact — face it.

This thing is not done in a corner. It is done openly in the eyes of the world. We will not be bothered now by interpolations and redactions. We are out in God's open air, where we can see clearly for ourselves. According to the New Testament, Jesus walked along the shores of a little sea known as the Sea of Galilee. And there he called Peter and Andrew and James and John and several others to be his followers, and they left all and followed him. After they had followed him they revered him, and later on adored and worshipped him. He left them on their faces, each man saying, "My Lord and my God!" All that is in the New Testament.

But put the New Testament away. Time passes; history widens; an unseen Presence walks up and down the shores of a larger sea, — the sea called the Mediterranean, — and this unseen Presence calls men to follow him. Tertullian, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Francis of Assisi, Thomas à Kempis, Savonarola, John Huss, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, Uhlric Zwingli, John Calvin — another twelve — and these all followed him and cast themselves at his feet, saying, in the words of the earlier twelve, "My Lord and my God!"

Time passes; history advances; humanity lives its life around the circle of a larger sea — the Atlantic Ocean. An unseen Presence walks up and down the shores calling men to follow him. He calls John Knox, John Wesley, George White-

field, Charles Spurgeon, Henry Parry Liddon, Joseph Parker, Jonathan Edwards, Horace Bushnell, Henry Ward Beecher, Richard Salter Storrs, Phillips Brooks, Dwight L. Moody — another twelve — and these leave all and follow him. We find them on their faces, each one saying, "My Lord and my God!"

Time passes; history is widening; humanity is building its civilization round a still wider sea — we call it the Pacific Ocean. An unknown Presence moves up and down the shores calling men to follow him, and they are doing it. Another company of twelve is forming. And what took place in Palestine nineteen centuries ago is taking place again in our own day and under our own eyes. Only the other day Herod stretched forth his hand and vexed certain of the church, and he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. Did you not see it reported in all the papers? Only a few weeks ago Stephen, a Christian preacher, was mobbed. Before his persecutors he fell down helpless, and in his dying moment he prayed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." It was in all the papers; did you not read it? Not long ago Saul of Tarsus, having worked in Asia in the Chinese Empire, was shoved to the wall by brutal strength, and the last thing he said to us was: "I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." Did you not hear it?

What are you going to do with Christian history?

How are you going to explain it? How are you going to unlock its mystery? I believe that the New Testament is the only key that will fit the lock. The New Testament gives us the clew to the interpretation of nineteen centuries. This is the value of the book. It is not the sole defence of Christianity, but it reveals to us the meaning of the church and explains her conquests.

What, then, are you going to do with this second fact, a living, growing church with a history? There are only three things which can be done with it. You may say that the church lives and grows because Christ, God's only Son, is indeed with her, even as he promised; or you may say that the Christian church is the creation of a horrible delusion, a monument which bears awful witness to the infinite capacity of the human mind for error; or you may say that the life and power of the church are due not to a miraculous element in the New Testament, but to its ethical teaching. You may say it is not the story of the miraculous birth, or the story of the miraculous resurrection, or the account of the unparalleled things supposed to have come from Jesus' lips, which have created the church and made it strong, but that all its strength has come from the sweet and simple life of a noble-hearted peasant who announced the Golden Rule and urged men to love one another.

But if a man asserts that the strength of the Christian church is not due to the higher conception

of Jesus, which the church has entertained from the beginning, he ought to bear in mind that the lower conception of Jesus has been in the world from the first century until ours, and that the two conceptions have been in unending conflict. The lower conception of Jesus is no modern thing in the realm of human thought, nor is it the product of our scientific habit of mind. The lower conception was held tenaciously by the men in the streets of Jerusalem. "You being a man are making yourself God." They held the lower conception of him, he held the higher; and because he did hold the higher they filled the air with curses and reached about for stones with which to crush him to the earth. After his death many members of the Jewish church, attracted by the beauty of his teachings, were willing to accept him as a leader. They discarded the miraculous stories which were told by those who had known him best, and chose rather to revere him as an illustrious prophet, superior in wisdom to all who had gone before him. These Jewish Christians were known as Ebionites. They had among their number many honest and earnest and learned men; but their influence was a waning one, and at last in the fifth century they vanished from the earth.

In the second century another conception of Jesus came into vogue. There were men who were unsatisfied by the conception advocated by the Ebionites. The Ebionites did not do Jesus

justice, and so these second-century thinkers, who are known in history as Gnostics, gave him an exalted place, acknowledged his preëxistence, and claimed that he was an intermediary being, holding the chief place in the long line of angels by which the chasm between heaven and earth is spanned. Gnosticism had many learned and mighty defenders, but Gnosticism grew weak and vanished.

In the third century the Neoplatonists appeared. Ammonius Saccas was their founder. They were men who combined the New Testament with philosophy in a most attractive fashion. They saw the beauty of Jesus' character, and were glad to acknowledge it. But to the Neoplatonists, Jesus was nothing but a lovely man. They were willing that his statue should stand along with the statues of Abraham, and Pythagoras, and others. They liked to inscribe the Golden Rule on the walls and monuments of cities. As one of their greatest teachers, Porphyry, says, "We must not calumniate Christ, but only those who worship him as God." Neoplatonism in its day was mighty; but the time came when it dwindled and died.

In the fourth century a distinguished Christian preacher in Alexandria, by the name of Arius, dissatisfied with the higher conception of Jesus as entertained by the church, brought forth a conception which seemed to him to be truer to the Scriptures and more satisfying to the heart. According to Arius, Jesus Christ is indeed great, the very first

of all created beings. He existed before the days of his incarnation, and has ascended to the heavens where he is to be the judge of the quick and the dead. His name is indeed above every name, says Arius, but he is not God. Arianism had many enthusiastic and learned advocates, and as the belief of isolated Christians, it has maintained a foothold almost to the present hour. But as a church, Arianism never grew strong enough to conquer.

It was in the sixteenth century that a man named Socinus brought forth another conception which in his judgment was far superior to the conception which the church had always held. According to Socinus, Jesus was born a man and by complete submission to God he became at last a god himself, earning for himself the right to be the master of the ages and the judge of our race. Socinianism was exceedingly plausible, making many converts on the continent, passing into England, and thence to the United States. But Socinianism has vanished from the earth. In the eighteenth century, Socinianism struck its roots deep in the Presbyterian churches of England. A large proportion of all English Presbyterian churches came under the sway of the Socinian conception of Jesus — and with what result? Did you ever ask yourself why English Presbyterianism is among the weakest of all Protestant communions in that country, lagging far behind the Baptists, the Congregationalists, and the Wesleyans? Certainly here is a phe-

nomenon which must be accounted for, and the explanation is written large in history. English Presbyterianism became blighted as by a deadening frost when it accepted the lower conception of the person of Jesus Christ. The Socinianism of England reached across the Atlantic, and like a subtle leaven entered into the religious life of Massachusetts. The first church to become openly Unitarian was an Episcopal church, King's Chapel, in Boston. A few years later Congregational churches began to pass over, until about one-quarter of the entire number had openly confessed their adherence to this lower conception of the person of Christ. Harvard College, with its president and its professors, went over, so did the Beacon Street aristocracy. The men of learning and of leading, the philosophers, the poets, the men of wealth in large numbers, identified themselves with the Unitarian faith. It looked at one time as though the entire world would inevitably surrender the higher conception of our Lord, and Dr. Ellis in his history of Unitarianism says that Unitarians were confident that before fifty years were passed orthodoxy would become a thing of the past, while Unitarianism would be the prevailing type of religion.

All that happened in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. We are now at the beginning of the twentieth century, and what is the situation? The Congregationalists who remained true to the higher conception of Jesus have become an army of 650,000,

those who accepted the lower conception of Jesus are to-day a small company of 70,000. The Congregational churches which remained true to the teaching of the church have in foreign lands to-day hundreds of men and women teaching the gospel of the blessed God, while the Unitarian churches of this country have not one single missionary in pagan lands. How are we to account for the deadening effect upon spiritual life of every conception of Jesus save the conception which was held by the apostles at the beginning? We cannot say that the lower conception has not had a fair trial. It has been in the world for almost nineteen hundred years, and every century has had its Martineaus, its Harnacks, and its Channings. It has been advocated and defended by men who have brought to its defence the resources of scholarship, and the eloquence of a passionate enthusiasm. It has been professed by kings and their courts, the learned, the high, and the great; but for some reason or other, this lower conception of Jesus sooner or later goes down.

I am bringing no arraignment against any body of Christians on the earth; I am simply stating facts as I find them, and as an earnest student in search of truth I ask myself what is the interpretation of these facts? Why is it that the lower conception of Jesus cannot conquer? I can understand how a delusion might maintain its ground one generation or a half-dozen genera-

tions; but I cannot believe that a delusion would be mightier than the truth through sixty generations. The two conceptions have met again and again and again, and every time they have met the lower conception has been routed and driven from the field. Nineteen of God's centuries have come out of eternity since Jesus died upon the cross, and all of them have put the crown on the head of the higher conception of Jesus, and broken the sceptre of the lower conception.

The Christian church may be likened to a tree throwing out its branches in all directions. Every branch that has held up its leaves to Christ as the sun of righteousness has grown vigorous, and every branch whose leaves have been turned toward Jesus as a man has withered and shrivelled. How is this to be accounted for?

There is something pathetic in the disappointment of the men who in spite of history keep on clinging to the lower conception. William Ellery Channing, after forty years of as earnest work as any Christian preacher ever did, said in his old age, "I would that I could look to Unitarianism with more hope." Edward Everett Hale, a man who has seen more than eighty summers, is reported to have said recently, "I do not see why so simple and democratic a religion as Unitarianism has not swept the country long ago." The Boston saint is not so keen-eyed as an aged Jew whose words are recorded in the book of the Acts. When

the apostles were brought before the Sanhedrin on the charge of stirring up people by preaching to them the religion of Jesus, some of the members of that distinguished body were in favor of squelching them at once; but Gamaliel arose and argued thus, "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight against God." That is to say: if a thing is of God, it will succeed and grow; but if a thing is not of God, it will come to naught. Through sixty generations the lower conception of Jesus has been coming to naught. Through the same length of time the higher conception of Jesus has been growing. If you tell me that God will allow a delusion to conquer the truth through sixty generations, and that he will permit a delusion to produce nobler men than the truth, and that he has so constructed the universe that a blasphemy and a lie will produce a church richer in all the graces of the spirit than truth can produce, I should be tempted to say in Milton's words, "The pillared firmament is rottenness, and earth's base built on stubble." How can we believe that there is anything true in the universe if error succeeds continuously and gloriously, and brings forth finer fruit than the truth?

There is a vast difference between the lower conception and the higher. We are sometimes told that the conceptions are similar, and that there

is no radical difference. All such assertions are false. The distinction is cardinal and reaches to the roots of life. The church which holds to the lower conception may seem similar in its worship and life to the church that holds the higher conception. Young people who have not yet learned to look below the surface are apt to be deceived by appearances. There are indeed many things in both churches alike. In both there is the water of life, in both there are many of the same virtues and graces, in both there are men and women who are earnest, sincere, and industrious in good works. But although so much alike, one church is a pool and the other church is a spring. The church which holds the higher conception of Jesus is a spring. It has in it a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. The other church is a pool. The difference between a pool and a spring is that a spring is fed from within, while a pool is fed from without. A church that holds the lower conception of Jesus is never more than a pool. It exists only in the neighborhood of other churches which can feed it. If you put it into a community by itself, it will in the course of time evaporate. Churches which hold to the lower conception of Jesus are always more abundant and enjoy greater prosperity the nearer they are located to churches which hold the higher conception and in which the water of life is abundant. In the ecclesiastical world, as in the natural world, around every spring there are

pools. Pools have their uses on the earth, but let us never forget that they cannot exist without the springs.

We are living in a scientific age when men are everywhere believing that there is such a thing as the survival of the fittest. If a form of life survives in spite of opposition, and persists in growing through a long stretch of time, beating back its competitors and succeeding where they have failed, men are ready to say that this is the form of life which deserves to live. The others have fallen by the way because nature does not need them. Now here we have a conception of Jesus of Nazareth which has from the very start been obliged to make its way in the face of the most determined opposition. It has been opposed and resisted with fierce determination and long-continued enthusiasm and vigor. It has been attacked by every weapon known to the ingenuity of the human mind. It has been subjected to the keenest analysis, burned in the hottest of critical fires. It has been ridiculed and scorned and hated; but the ages have not been able to kill it. Now when we see an idea coming out of every battle more luminous and radiant and glorious; when we see a conception making its way through the storms and tempests of nineteen centuries, and coming out at last stronger than all its competitors, and triumphant over all of its foes, is it too much to say that this idea survives because it is fit to survive, that this

conception is indeed the conception which God intends humanity to hold?

Let us now look at the third fact. Our first fact was the portrait of Christ, our second fact was a growing church with a history, our third fact is a constant and persistent individual experience. Here we reach the foundation. Were it not for the Christian heart, belief in the deity of Jesus would have vanished from the earth long ago. Christianity — it is not built on a book, but on the heart. When Peter and John began to preach the gospel, they refused to be silenced by the Jerusalem authorities, saying, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Paul always stood upon his own personal experience. When he talks to the mob in Jerusalem, he tells them about the wonderful light that fell round about him from heaven. When he addresses King Agrippa, he repeats to him the same story. Every one of the apostles speaks with the same accent and after the same fashion. Each one says, "I know whom I have believed." Would you see a picture of a kind of witness against which the scepticism of the world will never prevail, read the story of the blind man in the ninth chapter of John. The Jews endeavored to get him into an argument, but he refused to argue. "One thing I know; whereas I was blind, now I see." On that experience the man was willing to stand. From that assertion the Sanhedrin could not drive him.

Those eyes able now to see were mightier than all the arguments which could be brought against them. It is the open eyes looking out upon a world which Jesus has made new that furnish the testimony to the deity of Jesus which can never be destroyed. So long as he makes for human hearts all things new, men will honor him even as they honor the Father.

The experience of the first century has been repeated in every age. There were no greater theologians in the nineteenth century than Frederick Denison Maurice in England and Horace Bushnell in the United States. The first was the son of a Unitarian clergyman, the second was born in an evangelical home, but in college became a sceptic. Both of them were obliged to pass through great struggles in the search for the truth. Maurice at last reached the point where the lower conception of Jesus was untenable. He came out into the experience of Peter and John and Paul. In writing to a friend he said, "I did not receive this of man, neither was I taught it. Every glimpse I have caught has come to me through great confusion and darkness." He believed in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because his nature demanded that kind of God. Bushnell came at last to the same conclusion. "God," he said, "is what we want, not a man. God revealed through man that we may see his heart and hide our guilty nature in the bosom of his love. I have a heart as well

as a head, my heart wants the Father, my heart wants the Son, my heart wants the Holy Ghost, and one just as much as the other. My heart says the Bible has a trinity for me, and I mean to hold by my heart."

But if you want the cream of the experiences of the Christian centuries, read your Hymn Book. It is in the poetry of the church that the experience of the Christian heart finds its sweetest and fullest expression. The greatest hymns which have ever been written have been hymns extolling the name of Jesus. The hymns which congregations sing the best are hymns which glorify his name.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side that flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly
While the billows near me roll,
While the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Saviour! hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide;
Oh, receive my soul at last!"

The writer of the first was a Calvinist, the writer of the second was an Arminian; but Calvinists and Arminians are one in Christ Jesus.

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

That hymn was written by a woman; but there is neither male nor female in Jesus Christ.

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear."

That was written by a man who had been a godless sailor.

"Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near:
Oh, may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes!"

That is the prayer of an English scholar.

"My faith looks up to thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine!
Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my guilt away,
Oh, let me from this day
Be wholly thine!"

"Art thou weary, art thou languid,
Art thou sore distressed?
'Come to me,' saith One, 'and, coming,
Be at rest.'"

The first is from the heart of an American Congregationalist, the second is the hymn of an eighth-century monk.

"Jesus, the very thought of thee,
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far thy face to see
And in thy presence rest."

That is from a Roman Catholic; and this is from a Scotch Presbyterian:—

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,—
'Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast!'
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting-place,
And he hath made me glad."

Roman Catholics and Protestants are all one in Christ Jesus. But why go on? In the Hymn Book, we have a great company of men and women, gathered from all nations and kindreds and tongues. They stammer in their efforts to express what they feel.

"Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
My dear Redeemer's praise!
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!"

Unable to put into verse the adoration of the redeemed heart, they say to one another:—

"Tell me the old, old story
Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and his glory,
Of Jesus and his love.
Tell me the story simply,
As to a little child,
For I am weak and weary,
And helpless and defiled.

"Tell me the old, old story,
Tell me the old, old story,
Tell me the old, old story
Of Jesus and his love."

VIII

THE MIRACLES

VIII

THE MIRACLES

"What manner of man is this?"

— Mark iv: 41.

Let us think this morning about the miracles of Jesus. The Christian religion is incredible to a large number of people in our day because of the miraculous element which runs through the New Testament. The miracles are everywhere spoken against. Men are saying that Christianity would make a stronger appeal to the heart and conscience of the twentieth century if in some way the miraculous element could be dropped. Let us hold fast — these people say — to the ethical element and the Golden Rule, the Beatitudes, and all of the parables and discourses which inculcate reverence toward God and love toward men, but let us lay aside all miraculous stories as the creations of a credulous and superstitious age.

Now it is not difficult to understand how this state of mind has come to be. It has been created in large measure by the emphasis which science has placed upon the fact that the universe is governed by unchanging law. Everything, says science, in the heavens above and in the earth beneath, is in the grip of laws which know neither

variableness nor shadow of turning. In a universe in which everything is thus ordered, and in which all processes go forward, advancing from step to step in a sequence which is invariable, a miracle seems to be an interloper. It is an eruption into the realm of ordered harmony. It seems to be an impertinence which ought to be rejected by the mind forthwith. And the scientific spirit is being reënforced by the spirit of historical investigation. It has become clear to all students of history that a broad stream of miraculous pretension flows down the centuries. Herodotus has his miraculous tales and Livy has his prodigies, and when we pass into Christian history, the centuries are simply weighted down with legends and traditions of the miraculous. So many of these tales are absurd and incredible that men look with suspicion upon all stories of the miraculous, no matter where the stories are found. If the miracles of the fifteenth, and tenth, and fifth, and fourth, and third, and second centuries are the creation of the religious imagination, why not throw the miracles of the New Testament into the same class and pitch them all behind us? No member of the Christian Church can go far into the modern world without finding himself face to face with people who look upon the New Testament miracles as fables, and who look down upon a person who accepts these stories as authentic history, with a smile half of pity and half of scorn. In the presence of such

persons, what is a Christian to do? If a man accepts the miracles of the gospel, he ought to have good reasons for so doing, and if these reasons are clear to his own mind, he ought to be able to state them to those who look upon the New Testament as a book filled with outgrown superstitions.

It is not possible for me in a single hour to take up the problem of the miracles in all its various relations and implications, nor is it possible for me to bring out all the evidences which can be adduced in favor of the reality of the miracles ascribed by the evangelists to Jesus. All I can do is to throw out a few suggestions indicating to you the direction in which the sanest modern scholarship is moving, and to lay down a few simple propositions upon which a man may stand if he wants to beat back the attack of those who ridicule belief in miracles as the action of a belated mind.

It should be borne in mind at the start that the question of the miracles is not closed. Many people speak as though this whole question were closed, as though there were not two sides to it in the opinion of any sensible man, as though the door had been shut and locked and the key thrown away. Now all this is pure assumption. It is not a closed question which we are considering. If a man says, "You cannot prove that Jesus worked miracles," we may say with equal confidence, "You

cannot prove that he did not." Not a man on this earth, be he scholar, philosopher, explorer, or scientist, can ever prove that these miraculous deeds ascribed to Jesus were never done. If it cannot be demonstrated that Jesus worked miracles, neither can it be demonstrated that he did not work them. So that we are all on the same footing, and there is room for the discussion of the question whether or not it is probable that these things took place in the manner in which the evangelists say they did.

Nor should it be forgotten that it is not indubitable proof of extraordinary mental acumen to toss the miracles aside as unworthy of study. Nothing is easier intellectually than to cut out of the New Testament the miraculous element. It requires no mental effort to do this, and after it is once done there are no perplexing problems remaining. It causes no more mental exertion to rub out these miracles than it does to rub out figures written on a slate. If a teacher hands to a boy a slate on which he has written down a few sets of figures, there are two courses open to that boy. He can rub the figures out. This requires no intellectual effort, and for that reason a boy is sometimes tempted to do it. Or he can do the other thing; he can work at those figures, endeavoring to get out of them a solution. It may be he will cry before he gets through with them, and possibly he will have a headache before a solution has been

reached; but if he is a boy intellectually in earnest, he will hold fast to those figures until the problem is solved. It takes more intellectual effort to keep the figures on the slate than to rub them off. Now if any man wants to do the thing that is intellectually easy, by all means let him rub the miracles out. If he wants intellectual work, let him hold fast to the miracles, and say, "Climb, O my soul, to the heights of these great stories, and see if they are not windows opening out upon God and nature and man!" For if these miracles are things which really happened, then they throw fresh light upon the nature of man as well as upon the heart of God. New problems at once come before us, and we must go to work afresh to think out the relations of God and man and nature to one another.

If one hears it said that the miracles are impossible, a proper reply to offer is that the word "impossible" is rather a hazardous word to use. It was once safe to use it, but the advance of modern science has taken it from our lips. It will not do at this date in the world's history to be dogmatic in regard to what is possible in the realm of fact. The meekest men on the earth to-day are the great scientists, — not the little men who rush into the morning newspapers and tell you that they have discovered something which they have not discovered at all, but the great scientists who understand most fully the immeasurable range of nature

and the tiny reach of man's mind. Men who live close to nature become exceedingly modest. They realize they are simply children standing on the shore of a tiny island, and that at their feet there break the waves of an immeasurable and unexplored sea. In a former age scientists dared to say what could happen and what could not. The great Laplace once declared that it is impossible that stones should fall out of the heavens on the earth. Only about sixty years ago Auguste Comte declared it to be impossible for man by any means to determine the chemical composition of any of the heavenly bodies. The illustrious Stephenson asserted it to be impossible for the Mediterranean to be connected with the Red Sea. Did we not say, all of us, only the other day, that it was impossible to see through an oak plank six inches thick? We once thought we could tell what could be and what could not be, but fuller knowledge has made us modest. A man has more presumption than wisdom who asserts with confidence that these New Testament miracles could not have happened.

And if one should say that he must reject the miracles because he cannot believe that the laws of nature were ever violated, our reply is that a miracle is no violation of the laws of nature. Miracles are neither a violation of the laws of nature, nor a suspension of them, nor a modification of them. Every miracle known to the New

Testament was undoubtedly done in accordance with the laws of nature. When we talk about the laws of nature, we refer simply to the laws of nature which we ourselves have some knowledge of; but what are these laws? Name them. How many have you? Have you named them all? Would you dare say that you have them *all?* Until you are sure that you know all the laws of nature, you cannot say that a miracle is a violation of natural law. Many laws of nature have been discovered only recently. It was yesterday that Marconi got hold of a law by means of which he has been able to perform what seems to me the most wonderful miracle wrought within the last hundred years.

Now if the great scientists can thrust their hands into the soft walls of the temple which we call the universe far enough to touch forces by means of which they are able to work the miracles of the modern world, why should it be thought a thing incredible that God's only begotten Son should thrust his hand down deep enough into the universe to touch forces by means of which he could accomplish all the wondrous things spoken of in the gospels? If we could see the universe as it is, we should undoubtedly see that everything which Jesus did was done according to law. No law was ever violated by him in any work he did. But here the question may arise: Can the course of nature be changed? Is it likely that once in Palestine the

course of nature was really changed? In reply to such inquiries we may fairly say that we ordinary men are able to change the course of nature, and that indeed to an extent quite surprising. In the course of nature this book lies here before me on the desk. It is natural for it to lie there. But I can pick it up and hold it above my head. In doing this I am not violating the law of gravitation, nor am I suspending it, for the force of gravitation to my certain knowledge is still at work. I am not interfering with the law of gravity in any manner, but am simply working the force of my will into the force of gravitation in such a way as to get an outcome that would never have been obtained except for the exercise of my will. Now if an ordinary man can work his will into this complex of forces which we call nature, in such a way as to get out of nature products which nature if left to herself would never produce, why should not the Son of God be able to work his will into the winds and the waves, into blind eyes and shrivelled nerves to such an extent as to bring forth results at which the world marvels?

I have a little piece of land in New Hampshire, and the land for all I know has been lying there for hundreds of thousands of years. In all that time it has never brought forth one single potato. The course of nature has had freedom through all the hundred thousand years, and if that land were not interfered with, it might lie there a hundred

million years without bringing forth a potato. But if I scratch the soil a little and toss into it a few pieces of potato (just enough to give the soil an idea of what a potato is like), nature immediately takes the hint and brings forth a whole basketful of potatoes. I have changed the course of nature. God has made it possible for man thus to change nature's course. To a potato-bug sitting on the fence, I am a worker of miracles. Now if a man can change the course of nature, and compel nature to do what nature would never do if left to itself, why should it be deemed a thing incredible for God's only begotten Son so to change the course of nature as to bring forth the products narrated by the evangelists? It will be safer then to give up the use of that word "impossible" altogether. With God all things are possible.

The strongest thing which any man can say against the miracles is that they are to him incredible. But no man has a right to use that word until he has studied the evidence, and found out whether the miracles are credible or not. The credibility of the miracles is simply a question of evidence. The evidence must be sifted and weighed before any verdict is given. No man is fit to sit on a jury who decides the case before he has heard a word of evidence. Whether it is credible or not, the evidence for the miracles of the New Testament is voluminous. A man cannot set himself up in this field as a judge before

he has done some hard and honest work. A bookkeeper cannot look up from his books and say in a careless way, "Ah, those things are all preposterous!" A merchant has no right to say while he is eating his lunch, "I think those stories are incredible." A man cannot jump in from the street and say, "I will give you an opinion regarding this matter, those stories are all discredited." The wise man will wait until the evidence is in before he gives his answer. When therefore you hear a man talking about the incredibility of the miraculous stories of the New Testament, simply ask him whether or not he has sifted and weighed the evidence. If he tells you he has never given any time or thought to the evidence, it might be suggested to him that all things considered it would be well for him to ascertain what can be said in their support.

But suppose a man says he does not care to study the subject at all? He reminds you that nothing is so common as stories of the marvellous. John says Jesus worked miracles; Tacitus says Vespasian worked miracles. As Tacitus was evidently mistaken, so John must have been mistaken also. This is a kind of argument which is common. Oh, the superficiality of many men and women who imagine themselves to be wise! The Christian church has a Bible, and we are told that every religion has a Bible, and if every religion has a Bible, then, of course, all Bibles are alike. They

are all good, and all helpful, and our Bible differs in only minor points from the Bibles of the other great religions of the world. That is the fashion of much of our modern reasoning. A man who has gotten all his knowledge of the Bibles of the world from the headlines of newspapers and from a half dozen articles in some magazine finds no difficulty in throwing all the Bibles of the world into the same class, but scholars who have given thought to the subject, and who have studied all the sacred writings of the world, place the Bible in a class by itself. There is no other book in all the world like our Scriptures.

The same sort of reasoning is often heard from men who talk about the Trinity. The Christian religion has a Trinity, and so also, they say, has Buddhism, and so also had the old Egyptian religions, and so have many other religions. Of course the trinities are all alike, and all of them to be discarded! But the man who tosses the doctrine of the Trinity as taught by the Christian church into a class along with the trinities of other religions, proves by his action that he knows nothing of the subject concerning which he is speaking. The doctrine of the Trinity as taught by the Christian church is not at all like any Trinity known to any other religion under heaven.

When we come then to the subject of miracles, we must learn how to discriminate. Because there were miracles in the Middle Ages, it does not follow

that those miracles were like the miracles recorded in the New Testament. The name is the same, the differences are world wide. The New Testament miracles are sane, the mediæval miracles are nearly all wild, extravagant, absurd, crazy. There is evidence for the miracles of the New Testament; for most of the miracles of the mediæval ages there is little or none. There was a cause for the miracles of the New Testament; for most of the mediæval miracles there was none. There is a person in the New Testament around which the miracles gather. There is no such personality in the Middle Ages. There are no miraculous stories in the world like those in the New Testament.

Some people speak as though it were a very easy thing for the human imagination to create miraculous stories. It is indeed easy to construct stories of a certain sort, but not easy to construct such stories as those of the evangelists. After Jesus' death various stories sprang up concerning miraculous deeds which he did when he was a child. All these stories are ridiculous and disgusting. He made birds out of clay and bade them fly. He turned boys who ran away from him into kids. He struck dead a teacher who scolded him. He caused a tree to bend over that he might get the fruit which grew on it. That is the sort of stories which the imagination can create. Or if we go into the Middle Ages, we read of pieces of gold falling from heaven; of a mighty serpent ascending a

pyre in order to be burned in the presence of the people; of floods rising to the roofs of churches, but not entering the doors; of robbers being held up by the white hands of the Virgin Mary, and being saved from merited death. The mediæval stories are violent and abnormal. We have no right to class them with the miracles of the gospels. Now because one of two things is false, does it follow that both must be false? I hold in my hands two greenbacks. One greenback is a counterfeit. The authorities at Washington City have passed judgment on it. Shall I, therefore, say that the other greenback is counterfeit? "O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts!" and men have lost their reason if they argue after that fashion. There are, indeed, in the literature of every people spurious miracles in abundance, but because this is so, we shall not surrender the miracles of the gospels.

But some one says: If things narrated in the gospels were reported to have happened somewhere on the earth to-day, would you believe the report? Our reply is that we should not be likely to believe any such report, for the reason that no miracle is credible unless there are good reasons for its occurrence. Isolated marvels must always be looked at with suspicion. An isolated miracle is a sort of monster. The miracles of the New Testament, however, are a part of a great historic movement. They are not isolated wonders. They are clustered round one supreme person. They

belong to one vast historic movement which starts in Abraham and culminates in Jesus of Nazareth. There is a great mountain range of spiritual achievement running across the expanse of two thousand years, its mountain peaks glistening in the light of heaven, all the peaks leading up at last to one colossal summit that overtops them all. About the existence of this mountain range there is no dispute. It is something unique in the history of the world. Nowhere else is there such spiritual devotion, spiritual character, or spiritual achievement. In the presence of such a colossal moral miracle, why should it be wondered at if we find in connection with it physical miracles too? The New Testament miracles are credible because they are attributed to Jesus of Nazareth. It is not hard to believe that he worked miracles. Great things were natural and easy to him. He never strained in the doing of them. He never spoke of his acts as though they were wonderful. The most miraculous things he ever did were as natural to him as our most ordinary acts are to us. A person who has moulded the heart-life of races and created new civilizations, as Jesus undoubtedly has done, may reasonably be believed to have said to the wind and to the sea, "Peace be still!"

In studying the evidences for the miracles of the New Testament, it is wise to begin with the study of the greatest miracle of them all — the resurrec-

tion of Jesus. St. Paul stakes all his teaching on the truth of the resurrection. We can afford to do the same. For the resurrection of Jesus there is stronger proof than can be adduced in support of any other event in ancient history. Paul was converted four years after the death of Jesus. A few years later he went to Jerusalem to have a talk with Peter. You can imagine the conversation. Peter was a great talker. Even in the presence of Jesus himself he could hardly be restrained. How he must have talked to a man whom he recognized as his equal! Nor was Paul slow of speech. His mind was marvellously alert. He was a man who knew how to see difficulties and to ask questions. What a stream of talk must have flowed through those days in which Peter and Paul were together. Cannot you imagine you hear Paul saying: "Now, Peter, tell me, did Jesus do this? Did Jesus do that? Did he say this? Did he say that? What did he tell you by the sea? What did he say in the upper chamber? What did you find in the open tomb? What happened on the day of Pentecost?" Paul never left Peter until Peter had told the whole story from beginning to end. A few years later Paul in the course of his work had occasion to write to the church which he had founded in Corinth. That letter has been preserved. It is a part of our New Testament. It was written within twenty-five years of the death of Jesus. That it was written by Paul

is admitted by every sane critic. Men who have cut other parts of the New Testament to shreds have stayed their hands on coming to this first letter to the Corinthians. If this letter is not genuine, then we can give credence to no historical document whatsoever. In this letter Paul takes up the resurrection of Jesus. Among other things he says: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received. How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried and raised the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, then to the twelve, then he appeared to above five hundred persons at once, of whom the greater part remain until now." That is, over two hundred and fifty people are still alive who saw Jesus after he had risen from the dead.

This throws light on the way in which those early witnesses were regarded. The Christian church in those days was small; it was surrounded on every side by foes. Every Christian was precious in the eyes of his brethren. A peculiar sanctity belonged to those who had seen Jesus before his ascension. The death of any one of them was an event. Every decrease in that immortal company was noted. The church kept itself posted as to how many of these witnesses were still alive. Paul is able to say to the Christians in Corinth that over two hundred and fifty of the Palestinian witnesses are still living. "Then he appeared to James, then

to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also." The first facts he had taught the church in Corinth on the authority of Peter, but in addition to the testimony of Peter and the other apostles he had his own personal experience. How absurd, therefore, for any member of the Corinthian church to deny the resurrection of the dead. "If there is no resurrection of the dead," he says, "neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then is our preaching vain. Your faith also is vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable."

That Paul believed that Jesus rose from the dead does not admit of question. And Paul was no dunce. He was so great an intellectual giant that he dominates a large part of Christian thought to-day. And what Paul believed all the other disciples believed also. You may say they might have been mistaken in their belief, but if they were deluded, it was a costly delusion. It is incredible that men should ever have acted as those men acted if they did not believe with all their mind and heart and soul what they preached. James would never have allowed his head to be cut off with a sword if he had not believed that Jesus rose from the dead. Nor would Stephen have allowed himself to be stoned if he

had not believed Jesus was risen. All of the apostles one after another were killed except John. They all died in the same belief. Now these men either believed a truth or they believed a delusion. Which do you think is the more probable? If they believed a truth, then everything is turning out as it ought, but if they believed a delusion, then the whole Christian church is built upon that delusion, and we find that a delusion has perennial power to lift civilization Godward.

Delusions ordinarily are short-lived. As a general rule a delusion causes mischief, but here is a delusion which has proved to be the one greatest blessing of the ages. There are in the world to-day five hundred and fifty millions of Christians. Only nineteen centuries after Jesus' death the Christians outnumber the adherents of any other religion on the face of the earth. We are just in the beginning of Christian history. If only nineteen centuries after the crucifixion over one-third of the race has given Jesus a name which is above every name, it is not hard to believe that the time is coming when the millions of Africa and of China, of India and Persia, and the islands of the sea will confess that he is Lord indeed.

Now this story of the resurrection is inextricably embedded in a history that is full of miracles. If the miracles formed a sort of fringe to the story of Jesus' life, we could shear them off, or if the miracles were golden tassels hanging to the corners of the

gospel story, we could use our penknife. But the miraculous element is so interwoven with the other elements that it is impossible to get it out. Allusions to the miracles run into the narrative of Jesus' sayings in the most remarkable manner. Nicodemus goes to see Jesus by night, and among other things he says, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." Jesus passes condemnation on the cities of Galilee, saying, "If the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Peter on the day of Pentecost, addresses his countrymen thus, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." The words of Jesus and the words of his apostles move on the assumption that Jesus is performing miracles. There is a thrill of wonder in the very atmosphere of the New Testament writings. If you cut out of the New Testament every account of a miracle, and every reference or allusion to one, you have a book which is a mass of ruins.

But even if you destroy the New Testament, there are some things which cannot be destroyed. One of these is the Lord's Day. From the days of Moses down to Jesus the Hebrews had punctili-

ously observed the seventh day of the week as a day of rest. It was one of the most sacred of all their institutions. The Pharisees were sticklers for the letter of the law, and no Pharisee in his right mind would any more have thought of changing the day of rest from the seventh day to some other than he would have thought of shifting the foundations of the earth. But yet, for some reason, after the death of Jesus, the day of rest was changed from the seventh to the first. And it was changed by Jews. Paul, who was proud to say that he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, uses this language in writing to the Corinthians, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." That is only one of many references. Why the first day? Certainly something has happened. There has been a revolution, and the revolution has been brought about by no ordinary occurrence. What has given a sanctity to the first day of the week which lifts it above the level of all other days? There is no explanation so simple and credible as the explanation which the New Testament itself gives: Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. Through the Christian centuries the Lord's Day stands a monument which storms and revolutions cannot overturn, testifying to the glorious fact that Jesus rose. And what is the meaning of our Easter Sunday? There is a line of Easters running straight back to the first century,

and there the line stops. There was no Easter before Jesus died. Why should one Sunday of the year be singled out and given a glory which belongs to none other? Surely it must commemorate some extraordinary event in the experience of Christian people. There is no interpretation of Easter so reasonable as that which the New Testament supplies: it is the anniversary of the day on which the Prince of Glory rose. Here then, in addition to the New Testament, we have the Christian church, the Lord's Day, and Easter — all bearing witness to the fact of Jesus' resurrection. If proofs such as these cannot establish the reality of an event, then nothing in this world can be established.

Having made certain of the resurrection of Jesus, the greatest of the miracles, we need not tarry in our consideration of the others. Evidences equally strong cannot be brought in support of the other miracles. They become credible because they are associated with the miracle of the resurrection. If Christ was indeed a person so unique and transcendently great as to be able to burst the bonds of death, and to show himself alive to men, then it is not difficult to believe that he said to sick men, "Arise and walk"; or that at his word a storm fell dead at his feet. The miracle of the resurrection is so strong that it can carry all the other miracles on its back.

The miracles do not hold the place in apologetics which they held a hundred years ago. All through

the eighteenth century it was customary for men, in proving the divine origin and authority of the Christian religion, to hold up prophecy and miracles as the strongest evidences which could be adduced. Christ did indeed come from heaven, men said, and what he said has divine authority because he worked these miracles, and because he fulfilled the prophecies. That was the line of argument pursued in the days of Paley. But ever since the time of Coleridge, Christian scholarship has placed increasing emphasis on the contents of the Christian religion. Look at this character, men now say,—listen to these words. Do you not know in your heart that a teacher such as this must have come from heaven?

Christianity itself, in its essence, bears witness to its truthfulness. And along with this we have an ever deepening and growing life in the Christian church. We cannot prove to the mind of our day and generation that Christianity is indeed divine because of anything that may have happened nineteen hundred years ago. The proof which carries weight to-day is a spiritual life in the souls of individual men strong enough to overcome evil and to reproduce the spiritual graces which are displayed before our eyes in the gospels. There are indications in the New Testament that we are not to rely upon the miracles of Jesus forever as prime evidence of his divine mission. His miracles are most abundant in the earliest traditions. Matthew

wrote down some of his recollections of Jesus. Mark, who was a special friend of Peter, wrote down many things which Peter remembered. Later on a Gentile physician, Luke by name, using the gospel of Matthew and the gospel of Mark, and also other documents, compiled the third of our synoptic gospels. And in each of these three gospels the miracles are abundant, but when we come to the gospel of St. John, the miracles are only half as many as are to be found in the first three gospels. John represents Jesus as speaking almost slightingly of his mighty deeds. To his disciples the Master is reported to have said, "Believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake." In the letters of Paul there is but one miracle insisted upon, and that is made the foundation of everything, — the resurrection.

In the writings of the great preachers of the second century the miracles are not allowed to hold a foremost place. They seem to be steadily kept in the background. There were other arguments which the preachers of the second century felt would be far more convincing to the people of their day than the narration of miraculous stories. What was true in the second century is doubly true in our own. The preachers of to-day keep the eyes of the people on the central figure in the gospel story, — Jesus of Nazareth. They say to men: "Follow him! Give yourself to him! Take

his yoke upon you and learn of him." And it is through fellowship with Jesus himself that one comes to believe that the gospel history is true.

Possibly a page of my own experience would be of interest to some young man here who may be perplexed in his efforts to find the truth. Nineteen years ago I found it exceedingly difficult to accept the stories of the miracles. I had been a teacher of chemistry, and later on a student of law, and the result of my entire education had been to give my mind a bias against all miraculous stories of every sort. One day I had a talk with Phillips Brooks in his study. By and by the conversation came round to the miracles. I said to him in great earnestness, "Dr. Brooks, must I believe the miracles?" It was a vital matter to me at that time, because I wanted to be a preacher, and I felt I could not accept them. His prompt reply to my question was, "I should not say that you *must* believe the miracles, I should say that you *may*." That little word "may" had magic in it. It changed the complexion of the problem entirely. I saw at once that I had been approaching the question in a wrong temper. I had felt that the church was trying to drive my mind, and against this compulsion I rebelled. I respected my intellect. I believed that it had rights which the church of God was bound to respect. I would not allow myself to be browbeaten even by

the apostles themselves. I had never heard any professor in a college say to his students on the threshold of a study, you must believe thus and thus; but when the great Boston preacher said, you may believe these things, — there are reasons for believing them, — the pressure was removed, the mental irritation passed away, and with my mind acting freely, I plunged into a study of Christian evidences with an alacrity which I had not been able to command before.

I imagine that many a young man is repelled from Christianity by a misapprehension of the temper of Jesus of Nazareth. I heard a lawyer one day give his opinion concerning the unreasonableness of Christianity. He did not often go to church, nor was he much acquainted with the New Testament. He knew, however, that in one of the gospels some such sentence as this occurred: "Believe and you will be saved. If you do not believe, you will be damned." That was sufficient for the lawyer. He wanted nothing to do with a religion so peremptory and dictatorial. But if a man will read the New Testament carefully, he will find, as Matthew Arnold found, that the shining characteristic of the teaching of Jesus is its sweet reasonableness. Jesus was always reasonable. He always spoke to the reason. "Have you not read?" "What thinkest thou?" "You yourselves judge what is right." This is the manner in which he approached thoughtful men. He never shoved

a man. He was full of truth, men were also sure that he was full of grace. When men, then, assert that Christianity says, "Believe or be damned!" you can boldly say there is nothing of the sort in the New Testament. The word "damned" is not to be found in the New Testament, not the "damned" which you hear men speak on the street. It is a foul and vulgar word into which the venom of a thousand blasphemous lips has been poured. Jesus never used such a word, nor should we. The proper word is "condemned," and in order to find out what the word condemned means, we must read the context. Jesus is giving his apostles their great commission. He says to them: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." Believeth what? That Jesus stilled a storm, that Jesus opened blind eyes, that Jesus turned water into wine? No. He that believeth the good news, the great truth that God is our Father, and that man is his child, and that all men are brethren, and that a man's life lies in service — this is the gospel. And who doubts that if a man believes this and lives this, he shall be saved? And who would deny that a man is condemned who refuses to think of God as his Father, who refuses to believe that he is God's child, and who persists in living like a brute instead of a man? Is it not clear that such a man is condemned — must

be condemned in his own conscience and by his own heart, by the best men, and by God?

What shall we say in answer to the questions: Has any man outside the Christian church a right to join it until he can honestly say that he accepts all the miracles? And if a man is a member of the Christian church, has he any right to retain his membership if he comes to a point where he can no longer honestly say that he believes in the miraculous deeds of Jesus? These are important questions, and an answer for them, I believe, is to be found in the New Testament. According to Paul, the supreme miracle is the resurrection. If a man denies that, he has gone as far as a man can go.

Now, fortunately for us, one of the apostles denied for a season the resurrection. All the remaining ten believed; he alone doubted. What did the ten do with him? Did they disfellowship him? No. They allowed him to retain his place. He continued to pray with them and to live with them. By remaining in their company, the day at last arrived when he came to see as they did and to rejoice in their experiences. If a man is ever going to believe in the resurrection of Jesus, he is far more likely to do it when he is in the presence of Christians than when he is away from their company. Paul followed the example of the apostles in Jerusalem. Certain members of the Corinthian church under the influence of

Pagan society surrendered their belief in the resurrection of Jesus. Paul was grieved, but he did not drive those people out of the church. There was a man for whom Paul thought there was no room whatsoever in the Corinthian church. He was the man who openly violated one of the clear commandments of God,—a man who was morally corrupt, and who was living a life which was an open scandal to all decent men. "Put him out," Paul cried with indignation; "don't you know that a little leaven will leaven the whole lump?" The Christian church cannot afford to carry along with it men who openly and defiantly transgress the laws of morality; but if men have doubts in regard to the interpretation of the New Testament, they are to be dealt with tenderly, instructed, persuaded. The error of their way of thinking is to be pointed out. They are to remain members of the Christian family, and grow as rapidly as they can and will to the full stature of instructed disciples in Christ.

Every man who is seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness under the leadership of Jesus Christ has a right, I think, to come into the Christian church, and the right to stay there after he is once in, no matter what he thinks about any particular article of the creed. None of us is up to the standard. Each one of us falls short at some point or other. We are all moral delinquents. One man falls short in temper, another in disposition, another in the way

he uses his time, another in the use of his money, another in his words, another in his home life, another in his business life, another in his treatment of his servants and inferiors. We are all sinners. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, but Christ is the friend of sinners. If our purpose is to do God's will, and our deep desire is to grow in grace, if our constant prayer is, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," we certainly have a right to claim a place in the church. If moral delinquencies and shortcomings do not cause us to forfeit our place in the church, surely that place cannot be forfeited by our intellectual confusions and doctrinal aberrations.

We are all more or less ignorant, we are all more or less confused, we all see through a glass darkly. All that the strongest of us can say is: "I count not myself to have apprehended. I press toward the mark for the high prize of God in Christ Jesus." And the prayer which we as a church need to offer continually is the prayer that Christ may more and more dwell in our hearts, till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

IX

SIN, AND ITS FORGIVENESS

IX

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"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—John i: 29.

Let us think about sin, and its forgiveness. We enter a realm, through which it is difficult for one to make his way, because of the vast mysteries that press in upon him, and because of the innumerable questions which spring up on every side. At every step a new by-path comes into view, enticing to the feet, and unless one keeps his eyes fixed steadily on the goal, he is certain to be lost in the mazes of speculation. Sin! The very mention of the word stirs the mind to action. Whence did sin come? What was its origin? How did it get into God's universe? That is a question to which no satisfying answer has ever yet been given. Why did sin come? Why does God allow a serpent to crawl across the surface of his fair creation? That question is as old as the race, and before it the human mind stands dazed and dumb. What are the effects of sin? To what extent does it weaken the will? How far can human responsibility be carried? This question carries us into

the realm of the divine sovereignty and human freedom, an arena in which the mightiest intellects of the ages have grappled with a perennial problem, their discussions filling volumes which cannot be numbered.

And what is the end of sin? We peer into the future as far as the mind's eye can look, but the end is not in sight. There is no other subject about which it is so easy to theorize, and to speculate, as this subject of sin. Strange to say, few subjects have had such fascination for the mind of man. Men have a morbid desire to think about it, to brood over it. Philosophers have said from generation to generation, "Come now, let us discuss this problem once more; let us compare our arguments and see to what conclusions we shall come." So fascinating have been the problems which evil has presented to the mind, that men have sometimes become intoxicated by the luxury of discussion, and have lost sight of the heinousness of sin, and the imperative necessity of getting rid of it. In these sermons we have nothing to do with speculation. We are endeavoring to hold our eyes steadfastly on certain facts. Our constant question is, What does Christianity teach concerning this thing, and what are the reasons for thinking that the teaching of Christianity is true?

The Bible is the most practical book ever written. It is almost entirely free from speculation. Its eyes are always fixed upon practical ends. It has

been so wound round by theories and speculations, that many of us do not realize what a matter-of-fact and practical book it is. To many men who are not acquainted with it, it is a book of daring guesses and lovely dreams; but to the man who knows it, it is the one book in all the world which hugs facts and hugs them close. All the great Hebrews, from Moses to John the Baptist, stood with both feet securely planted on the earth. Not one of them is gifted with the powers of speculation, not one of them is a weaver of fancies, or a dreamer of dreams. While the Egyptians and Babylonians and other Oriental peoples were losing themselves in fantastic speculations concerning the origin of the world and the end of it, the great men of Palestine grappled in desperate earnestness with the facts and forces of conduct. They saw life, not life in the clouds, but life on the earth, steadily, and they saw it whole.

In all the Scriptures there is no mind so sane and so practical as the mind of Jesus. Of all the teachers whom humanity has known, he is the least given to speculation, he cares the most for the problems of our everyday, ordinary life. He constantly disappoints the idle curiosity. The problems which lay round him he did not touch. The mysteries by which men's minds were baffled had no light shot through them from his lips. When his disciples attempted to lead him aside from the plain path of his mission, he curbed them.

He would not allow them either to speculate or to dream. When they asked him concerning times and seasons, his reply was, "You shall have power to do your work." This was his temper always, this was his attitude toward life. Men are not in this world to see the solution of all problems, or to pluck out the heart of all mysteries; they are in the world to do the work which God has given them to do.

Jesus is therefore disappointing in his treatment of human sin. The origin of evil he never touched. He left that problem as opaque as it was before he came. He seemed to take for granted that the origin of evil is a problem to be thought about and worked out in some other world than this. Nor did he ever touch the question why evil is allowed, nor did he ever discuss the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man. He simply put the two great facts together: God is king, man is free — and those two facts must be held together, both in this world and in the next. Nor did he tell men what is the end of sin. In his parables we see the retreating forms of incorrigible transgressors passing into the outer darkness, but our eyes cannot follow them through the gloom. If we come to the New Testament desirous only of teaching which will satisfy our curiosity, we are doomed to disappointment.

When the Bible touches sin, it grasps it with the rough hand of a man in earnest. It acknowledges

the presence of it, it confesses the reality of it, it emphasizes the malignity and the awful danger of it, and stirs up in the heart a passionate desire to get rid of it. That fact is the only thing essential. It is not necessary for us to know either the beginning of evil or the end of it; it is enough to know that sin is a burden to the heart of God, and that God has provided a way for our deliverance. Let us look then this morning at the Bible teaching concerning sin.

According to the Scriptures, all men are sinners. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous; no, not one. There is none that doeth good; no, not one." "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children." "When you pray say, forgive us our debts." Now is this teaching true to our experience? Is there a man here who feels he is not a sinner? Did you ever see a person who claimed his life to have been altogether innocent? Have you ever read in history of a human being without sin? Here and there we find a man who seems to be unconscious of his sinfulness; but his unconsciousness rises from the fact that he is dead in sin. His conscience has become calloused. His spiritual vision has become darkened. He has become brazen-faced by a long course in sinning, so that his heart does not cry out for pardon. But all men when they are in their right mind know

that they have sinned. And the better the man, the more conscious he is of his sinfulness. The coarse and careless man on the streets may never speak of his sins; but if you draw near to the closet in which some genuine saint of sensitive conscience and tender heart is pouring out his soul unto God, you will hear him praying the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." When Christianity teaches that all men have sinned, Christianity speaks no more than the truth.

The Bible asserts that sin has left its black mark on every part of human nature. The mind has been affected by transgression. Our thoughts are wayward, uncontrollable. We sin often in thought, and we do it easily. The heart has not escaped. Our emotional life is tainted; our feelings are not the feelings of a being who has never sinned. The will also is corrupted. It is both weak and rebellious. We sin in our choices as well as in our thoughts and our feelings. Our soul is a kingdom, and the trail of the serpent is over every province of the kingdom. There are thorns in every field. There is no section of our nature which has escaped the blighting touch of sin; no, not one. This is what theology calls "total depravity." It is a mischievous phrase, because not readily understood, and for that reason it is no longer used in public speech. It has an ugly sound and conveys false impressions. When men in the street say that a man is totally depraved, they mean that he is as

bad as he can be; that the last spark of goodness has gone out of him. But that is not what the theologians mean when they write of total depravity. They mean that the corruption of sin has extended to every part of man's nature; that every department of his life is vitiated by transgression; that the entire circumference of his life has been traversed by sin. When the church asserts that man in his entire nature has been hurt by transgression, it speaks only the truth.

The Bible uses the word "sin" in two significations. It says that sometimes sin is an act and sometimes it is a state. As an act it is a transgression of the law. We all know what sin as an act is. It is a lie, a theft, a bitter word, a cruel deed, some specific movement of heart, or mind, or tongue, which brings upon us the sense of condemnation. It is the sins of action which trouble our conscience most when we are young. But sin of action is not all. There is a sin of condition. We may be sinners and still be doing no sinful act. Our heart may be ungrateful, and an ungrateful heart is a sinful heart. We may have in our heart no filial feelings toward the All-good Father, and the heart that does not cry Abba Father is less than a human heart ought to be. This vitiated condition of our nature is due in part to our own repeated wrong choices and actions, and it is due in part to the continued transgressions of our ancestors. Sin is self-registering, and every wrong

choice leaves its mark upon the fibre of the man that makes it. And these evil effects are transmitted in the blood from generation to generation.

Thus it is that we find ourselves in possession of a sinful nature; the very ground of our life is sinful. Sin seems to run like a poison in the blood, and has an existence apart from our will. It is the sin of state or condition, and not the sin of act, which most disturbs us when we are old enough to know what kind of men God would have us be. In the seventh chapter of Romans Paul is describing not the sin of act, but the sin of condition. He says, "That which I do I allow not, for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." "Now it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Christianity recognizes that a man is in a lost condition, and that without the new birth salvation is impossible.

This sin of state is known in theology as original sin. The phrase covers the mass of sinful impulses and tendencies which have come down to us out of the past. Instead of speaking nowadays about original sin, however, we commonly use the word which science has made familiar to our ears,

heredity. There is such a thing as inherited evil. We belong to a race of sinners. We are all bound up together in one great tragedy of transgression. When the Bible says we are sinners not only in act, but in state, the Bible speaks the truth.

And now the Bible takes a step in advance which some of us may not be willing to follow. The Bible says that sin is heinous, it lies under the wrath of God. This is something we could not have known without the light of revelation. As it is impossible to know what man is in his full stature and dignity until the light of heaven falls upon him, so it is impossible to know sin in its length and breadth and height and depth until we see it in the light of Gethsemane and Golgotha. In one sense we may say that the consciousness of sin is universal. All men of all lands and times have realized that they were not right. In all lands there have been sacrifices and forms of worship instituted to appease the wrath of an offended deity. But in no race of men was there ever developed any such consciousness of sin as was developed in the heart of the Hebrew people.

The Egyptians and Babylonians had their catalogues of sins, but their sinfulness never troubled them as the sinfulness of the Hebrews troubled them. We may almost say that the ancient Greeks had no real conception of sin. The Greeks recognized the existence of vice, certain actions were to them unlovely, disagreeable, mischievous; but the

Greek people never felt the burden of its sinfulness. The countrymen of Homer and of Pericles were the jolliest and lightest hearted of all the peoples of the earth, as joyous and as sunny as the sea which broke into laughter on the shores of their lovely islands. The Romans were far more earnest than were the Greeks, but they had no deep consciousness of sin. We can hardly think of Julius Cæsar shedding tears over his transgressions. Rome had her priests and her sacrifices, but her conception of sin had slight influence on either the personal or the national life. Christianity is preëminently the religion which develops in its adherents a sense of sin. Buddhism, and Brahminism, and Confucianism, and Zoroastrianism, all recognize the existence of evil, and attempt to deal with it in different ways; but in none of these religions is there a recognition of sin in the sense in which Christians use that word.

It is impossible to have any adequate sense of sin without a great conception of God. It was because the Hebrew prophets saw God to be high and lifted up that they felt themselves to be sinners. "I am but dust and ashes," says Abraham. "Behold, I am vile, I will lay my hand upon my mouth," says Job. "Woe is me, for I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips," says Isaiah. All the great Hebrews, from Abraham to John the Baptist, lie with their faces in the dust, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Where in any literature

will you find a poem like the fifty-first psalm? "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." The man who wrote that is a Shakespeare in the realm of spiritual expression.

But it is not until we come into the presence of Jesus of Nazareth that we are able to see sin in all its terrible magnitude and malignity. The men of Palestine in the first century were busily engaged in discussing the grades and punishments of ceremonial sins. Jesus seizes upon these superficial statements of the Rabbis, and burns them up in the fierce fires of his indignation. His keen eyes see that sin is not a ceremonial thing, but a moral thing. It is not a matter of mere outward conduct, but of word and thought and feeling. Leaving the surface of life he plunges at once to the inner fountains from which flow impulses and motives and words, and says that a man must be changed at the very centre of his being, — he must be born again.

According to Jesus, there is nothing terrible in the world but sin. It is the thing to be shunned, feared, hated. "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better to lose an eye than to do wrong. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better to have no right hand than to do wrong. Beware how you tempt others to sin; it were better that a millstone should be hanged about a man's neck, and that the man should be cast into the midst of the sea, rather than that he should cause a human being to do wrong." That is not the language which you and I use, nor is it the feeling which is in our hearts. Many of us would commit a score of sins, rather than lose an eye or a hand. But to the mind of Jesus no loss which may come to the body is to be compared with the loss which comes to the soul by breaking the law of God. "Joy," he said, "shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." This feeling of Jesus was communicated to his disciples. His apostles go to work with unflagging earnestness to root out the sins of men. Whenever Paul writes of sin, his language becomes terribly earnest and intense. Sin to him is no shadow, it is an awful reality. He speaks to his converts in words which sound like the blast of a bugle. "Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

It is at this point that the world comes into con-

flict with the teaching of the church. The world thinks that the church makes much ado about little. Men of the world cannot see that sin is terrible, or that it needs to be shunned or feared. Men sometimes confess that they are sinners in a jocose tone; they confess their sinfulness between loud bursts of laughter. One would think from their behavior that sinning is a joke. Every generation has brought forth its host of writers who have endeavored to persuade the world that sin is nothing but a trifle, a kind of straw that some happy wind will some day blow away. Or they make it out a form of immaturity, an imperfection, a crudity, a greenness, a rawness, a pardonable ignorance which will certainly be outgrown. You do not blame the apple tree in the early spring because the blossoms are not full blown. Give the tree sufficient time, and the apples will be forthcoming. It sounds quite plausible, but is it true?

According to the teaching of some, sin is a necessity. Sin is a part of human nature, a part of human life, an integral element in the ongoing process of an unfolding world. God is the creator of sin, and men do wrong by a divine thrusting on. To all such teaching the church shouts, "No!" To all of the speculations of philosophy she says, in the words of the Master, that sin is real and terrible and heinous, the one thing to be feared and shunned by every son of man. And

the Christian church takes this position not because she desires to frighten men, or because she takes delight in dealing with dark and dismal things; but she must take it in order to be true to all the facts of human experience. Certainly sin is not a trifle. How can any man call it a trifle with the centuries unrolled before him. Oh, the long-drawn tragedy of the ages! Oh, the mountainous masses of woe and wretchedness and guilt! Every generation living its life amid groanings, every century dripping with blood! Certainly a thing which can cause such havoc, such devastation, such widespread and unspeakable ruin, is not to be considered a trifle.

Nor is there any reason for thinking that sin is only a form of ignorance or imperfection which will be outgrown by the lapse of time. Many men do not outgrow it, but they grow worse and worse and worse, becoming more and more brutalized and demonized, until they lie down and die as the beast dieth: And certainly we cannot roll the responsibility for the woe and the wreck of the ages on God. How does it happen that the springs are all polluted — the springs of home life, of commercial life, of political life? They are all poisoned. Surely an enemy hath done this, not the good God. The sane-headed Shakespeare declared that it was the foppery of the world to say that men are sinners by heavenly compulsion. Christianity thinks too much of man to allow it to be said that sin is a necessity.

If it be a necessity, then he is nothing but a puppet, a tool, a puny weakling not responsible for his doings, not capable of meriting either penalty or reward. Christianity knows no such doctrine as that, but she says boldly: "Man is free; man is responsible; man is created in God's image; he can create a heaven, he can create a hell. He will stand some day before God's judgment bar and receive the deeds done in the body." And because man is so great, wrong-doing takes on a terrible significance. Sin is a disease, an awful disease; a debt, an immeasurable debt; a load, a crushing load; a slavery, a galling, intolerable slavery — and the question is how can the world get rid of it? Canst thou, O Christianity, minister to a soul diseased? And Christianity says, "Yes."

For a great problem Christianity suggests a great remedy. Here it is, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish." The death of Jesus is the central fact of the New Testament. All the evangelists give more space to it than to any other event they narrate. Not one of the other writers of the New Testament can ever get away from it. Jesus came into the world to save men from their sins. He knew that to save them he must die. From the very beginning his death was in his mind. That he was thinking about it often comes out in his talk. Nicodemus goes to see him, and in the conver-

sation Jesus says, "The Son of man must be lifted up." Nicodemus did not understand what he meant, nor did the crowd understand later on what was meant by the words, "But I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." To the crowd in one of the temple courts he says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." No one caught his meaning. To the disciples of John the Baptist, who complained because his disciples did not fast, he says, "The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them and then will they fast." They understood not what he said. To the crowd in Capernaum he says, "The bread which I shall give you is my flesh," and they knew not what he said. To the crowd in the streets of Jerusalem he says: "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd." But they missed the meaning of his words. It was not until Peter had made the great confession at Cæsarea Philippi that Jesus begins to talk to his disciples plainly about his death. As soon as he finds men who are convinced that he is the Messiah, he begins to tell them that the Messiah must suffer. On their way southward from Cæsarea Philippi the evangelists tell us that Jesus while passing through Galilee took his disciples apart, and in a solemn manner told them for the second time that he was going to Jerusalem to die. A little later, while they were passing through

Perea, he told them the same thing again. When his disciples began to dispute as to who should be the greatest, he said, "The Son of man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." When James and John wanted high places in the kingdom, he spoke to them of his baptism and his cup. When he arrived at Bethany, Mary and Martha give him a dinner. Mary breaks an alabaster box of ointment on his feet. Jesus says that that woman's action will be spoken of wherever the gospel shall be preached because she has prepared him for his burial. On the last Tuesday of his earthly life word was brought that a company of Greeks wanted to have a conversation with him, and the announcement threw him into a meditative mood. He muses thus: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die . . ." The last night arrives, and he meets his disciples in the upper chamber. At the close of the supper he takes a cup of wine and passes it from one to another, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for many unto the remission of sins: do this in remembrance of me." Not only has his death been uppermost in Jesus' mind, but he wants it to be uppermost in the mind of the church forever.

When we pass into the epistles we are never permitted to get out of sight of the cross. It is the cross that dominates all. Paul writes to the

Corinthians: "I have determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." "Ye are bought with a price, therefore . . ." In his letter to the Romans he declares that he is able to glory in tribulations, for "when we were yet without strength Christ died for the ungodly." "God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The gospel of Paul is also the gospel of Peter, "Who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree." Christ died for our sins that he might bring us to God. The gospel of Peter is also the gospel of John. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." John in writing the book of the Revelation pauses in the midst of this narrative to sing, and this is his song, "Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood, to him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever." The exile on Patmos had a glorious vision, and it was this, "I saw a Lamb as it had been slain." When you hear the one supreme voice of the New Testament clearly, you hear it saying, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

"There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.
We may not know, we cannot tell,
What pains he had to bear;
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

"He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by his precious blood.
There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in."

Let us now go up into the highest pinnacle of the mountain of revelation and see what all this means. We are going to see things now which would never have entered into the heart of man had they not been revealed to him by God. Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Eternal God, dies upon a cross to save men from their sins. What does that mean? Do you believe that God thinks? We all believe he does. We are in the habit of saying the universe is the expression of his thought, and reverent scientists take delight in saying that they think God's thoughts after him. But does he feel? It is easier to believe that God thinks than it is to believe that he feels. We feel; we have emotions. We are sensitive. We respond to sights and cries of woe. Does

God feel? If we are created in his image, and if Jesus Christ is his Son, of course God feels. But does he feel sorrow? In other words, can he sympathize? Can he feel with us? Can he enter into the tragedy of our life and make our tragedy his own?

As for ourselves, we can sympathize. We can enter into the woes of others. We can feel with those in distress, and feeling with them is sorrow. Now if we are created in the image of God, and if Christ is God's Son, then of course God can feel sorrow. But is God capable of suffering? Can the Almighty God suffer? At this point we pause and shrink and draw back. We rebel against the thought of a suffering God. Our experience is similar to that of Simon Peter. When Christ told him he was going to Jerusalem to suffer, Peter would not hear him. He said, "Far be it from thee, Lord." And Jesus replied in substance, "Peter, you understand men, but you do not understand God." We have the same shrinking when we are asked to believe that God suffers. It is easier to think of him as a great, silent, emotionless sphinx, a vast unexplored ocean of serenity.

Shall God suffer? Far be it from thee, O Father, who art in heaven! But we can suffer. We agonize and bleed. And if we are made in the image of God, and if God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, then why should it be thought

a thing incredible that ours is a suffering God? We do not shrink from saying that Jesus is a man of sorrows. If Jesus speaks truly when he says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," then why should we hesitate to think of a God of sorrows? We are often told that Jesus is like God. It is just as true to say that God is like Jesus.

Is God capable of making sacrifices? Can he do anything that will cost him the blood of his heart? We human beings are capable of sacrificing ourselves for those we love. The mother sacrifices herself for her child, the friend for his friend, the patriot for his country — is it possible for Almighty God to make any sacrifice? If we are created in his image, and if Jesus Christ is his only Son, we must go on and say that it is possible for the Heavenly Father to make sacrifices.

What sacrifice can God make? We know the greatest sacrifice which an earthly father can make: he can surrender up his son. Can God make a sacrifice like that? Has he a Son? Not a son in the sense in which a finite creature of this earth can be a son, but a Son who is eternal as himself, who shares with him the government of the universe and enters into all his thoughts and plans, and whose fellowship is satisfying to God's infinite heart. Has he such a Son as that? Christianity says he has. There is an Eternal Son. The filial and paternal fellowships

existing here on earth are but shadows of things eternal in the heavens. We are created in God's image; and if our life is incomplete without fellowship, so also is the life of God. Will the Eternal Father send this Son to earth? Can this Son enter into human limitations, and think through a human brain, and feel through a human heart, and do life's work through the organs of a human body? Christianity says he can. Because man is created in God's image, it is possible for the godhead to dwell in human flesh.

Will God, then, send his Son? Christianity says he will. He has sent him. He sent men to the world, — prophets, heroes, saints, — but they were all rejected. Some were stoned, some were sawn asunder, some were slain with the sword, afflicted, tormented. At last God said, I will send my Son; they will reverence him. But representatives of our humanity seized him and nailed him to a cross. Instead of reverencing him, they mocked him. The elders, the old men of Palestine, — wise in counsel and discreet in government, the leaders in Church and State, — they stood before the cross and mocked their dying prisoner, saying: "Save yourself! Save yourself!" And with them stood the Chief Priests, the men whose business it was to offer up sacrifices to God — they also mocked him, saying: "Save yourself! Save yourself!" And with them stood the Scribes, the men appointed to teach the

meaning of God's law — and they also mocked him, saying: "Save yourself! Save yourself!" And around them stood the people who had come up to Jerusalem to say their prayers. They also mocked him, saying: "Save yourself! Save yourself!" And even the poor brutal soldiers who played their games at the foot of the cross looked up from their games long enough to mock him, saying: "Save yourself! Save yourself!" And the robbers, one on each side, they also mocked him, saying: "Save yourself! Save yourself!"

But Christ could not save himself. When has love ever been able to save itself? Love suffers long and is kind. Love prayed that these men might be forgiven. And ever since that glorious death on Golgotha, the human heart has grown tender at the memory of it, and sin has grown increasingly hideous, and men and women by the millions have been singing: —

> "Just as I am, thy love unknown
> Hath broken every barrier down;
> Now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
> O Lamb of God, I come!"

We are high up on the mountain, the mountain of God. If all that I have been saying is true, then divine love is richer than many of us have imagined. Sorrow is part of the life of God. The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. There has been a shadow on God's face ever since

the first man did wrong. There has been a wound in his heart ever since the first man hated his brother man. All the cries and groans and agonies and desolations of the burdened and sorrowing centuries have been a burden on a heart that is infinite in its tenderness and compassion. From the beginning he has carried the bleeding, burdened world on his heart, and because he carries it sin will some day die, and love shall reign supreme. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things: to whom be the glory forever. Amen."

X

SIN, AND ITS PUNISHMENT

X

SIN, AND ITS PUNISHMENT

"Behold then the goodness and severity of God."
— Romans xi : 22.

THERE is probably no feature of the Christian religion so generally misunderstood and so frequently caricatured as the teaching of the New Testament concerning the punishment of sin. There is a deal of confusion in the public mind at many points in the Christian creed, but at no other point is the ignorance so dense and the confusion so distressing as at the paragraph which deals with retribution. Many persons, apparently, know little more of the Christian religion than that it teaches future punishment. Men sometimes say that they do not care to go to church because they do not want to hear a man talk about hell. Such men, it would seem, have the idea that hell is the staple of the preacher's argument. Others have a fashion of speaking disrespectfully of all Christians, and the arraignment which they bring against them is that whereas Christians have hell in their creed, they give it no place in their actual belief. Christians therefore are largely hypocrites, people who say one thing and believe another.

Now it must be confessed that for this widespread confusion the church is in part to blame. Christian teachers have often gone beyond the letter of what is written in talking about this matter, and very frequently the doctrine of retribution has been presented in a form abhorrent to the reason of thoughtful men. Long before Jesus came, men had been thinking about the other world, and philosophers and poets had speculated concerning the doom of the wicked. The imagination had painted most fearful pictures of the torments and distresses of the souls of evil men, doomed to linger in the horrid gloom of Tartarus.

And it was inevitable that something of pagan thought and feeling should find its way into the Christian church, for the Christian church has always been modified it its life and in its thought by the world in which it stands, and the thought of Christian preachers is always more or less colored by the atmosphere of their age. The Christian church made its first converts from paganism, and a pagan on becoming a Christian did not leave behind him all the impressions of early education. Every man, it has been said, carries his cradle with him. No matter what we may become, we can never escape entirely from the thing which we have been. Men and women who had been brought up in the atmosphere of the pagan world naturally read into the words of Jesus the thoughts and feelings with which they had been familiar

since the days of childhood. Moreover, the Christian church went out to meet and conquer a desperately wicked world. Men were so brazen in their sinfulness, and so audacious and cruel in their opposition, that it is hardly to be wondered at that Christian preachers gave an exaggerated emphasis to the dark sayings of the New Testament, in order to make an impression upon the flinty hearts of the masses who were rushing to destruction.

Because, then, of the influences of pagan thought, and the widespread corruption of the pagan world, the leaders of the Christian church fell into the habit of giving a place to the doctrine of penalty out of proportion to the place which it holds in the gospels. The mediæval church from first to last was morbid and unchristian in its teaching concerning retribution. The supreme poet of the mediæval church is Dante, and Dante owes his reputation to the fact that he wrote about hell. Although himself a Christian poet, he borrowed his imagery largely from the pagan world, and many of his ideas were suggested not by Christ and the apostles, but by men who had lived and written before Jesus came. Three hundred years later Protestantism produced a mighty poet, John Milton, who also wrote of hell. He borrowed his imagery largely from Dante and from Virgil, and although he sometimes used biblical expressions, he dyed them all in the vat of pagan thought. Dante and Milton have probably

done more to shape the popular conception of punishment on the other side of the grave than all the preachers who have preached within the last three hundred years.

Oh, the marvellous fascination of pictures! How they attract us, and how they hold us with a grip that cannot be broken. It is impossible to forget a picture which the imagination has once seen. But we cannot put all the blame upon the poets; the preachers must come in for their full share of censure. Coarse and reckless men in the pulpit, gifted with a fatal facility in the use of words, have sometimes painted the woes of sinners in language which has driven the human heart to cry out, "Has God, then, no mercy?" And men of high intelligence and genuine refinement like Jonathan Edwards in the eighteenth century, and Charles Spurgeon in the nineteenth, have preached occasional sermons which, although delivered from Christian pulpits, have been in reality a travesty of the gospel and a libel on God. When so many misleading statements have been made in Christian pulpits, it becomes necessary for us to find out for ourselves what really is the teaching of Christianity in regard to this whole matter.

Let us go to work, then, this morning with the Bible. Let us shake off, if possible, the influences of Dante and of Milton, and keep within the limits of Holy Writ. For our present purpose we may drop out entirely the Old Testament, for there is

nothing concerning punishment in the Old Testament which is not said more clearly and more terribly in the New. And, moreover, there is not a single picture in the Old Testament of anything that is going to happen on the other side of death.

Whatever Christianity has to teach concerning retribution, is found in the New Testament. Nor need we pay special attention to any part of the New Testament except the gospels. The subject of retribution is not ignored by the writers outside the gospels, but they add nothing to the doctrine which is taught by our Lord himself. Coming, then, to the gospels with unbiassed mind, what impression do they make upon us in their treatment of penalty? Will you not agree with me in saying that the idea of retribution is held steadily in the background? The gospel, as Jesus preached it, was a message of good news. It is not good news that some men must be punished. Its supreme purpose is to persuade men to believe that God is Father and that every man is his child. The angel that announced the birth of Jesus whispered sweetly, "Do not be afraid." That is the first word of Christianity always. If you put any other word first, you have departed from the method of the New Testament.

Christianity approaches with words of sweetness and light. Nevertheless, the dark side of life is not ignored. God's goodness stands in the foreground; but God's severity is not forgotten. The Sermon

on the Mount may stand this morning as a good illustration of what the New Testament is from first to last. The Sermon on the Mount is a mountain range. As you look upon it, what is it that you see first? When you turn away from it, what do you remember longest? The sermon begins with "Blessed," eight times repeated. That is the first peak, and it is bathed in sunshine. It is a peak of blessing. Another peak is the Golden Rule; the Lord's Prayer is another peak. "Be not anxious for your life. Ye are of more value than many sparrows." That is still another peak. These are the prominent features of the Sermon on the Mount, and these are the things which God wants us, first of all, to lay to heart; nevertheless, these are not all of the Sermon on the Mount. There are deep and dark ravines in the sides of it. In one of the ravines we hear these words, "If your right hand offend you, cut it off; if your right eye offend you, pluck it out." In another ravine we hear: "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads unto life. Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads unto destruction." In another ravine we hear the Master speak of a man who may be likened unto a man who builds his house upon the sand. When the storm strikes it the house falls.

There is an abundance of sunshine in the New Testament; but near every sunbeam there is a shadow. When Jesus began his ministry in Nazareth, he quoted a passage from Isaiah to indicate

the spirit and the scope of his work. His quotation is remarkable in this, that he does not quote Isaiah to the end of his sentence. Isaiah says, "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." Jesus quotes the first words and omits the last. It is not a part of his mission, then, to proclaim "the day of vengeance of our God." And so wherever he went he said to men, "The Son of man is not come to condemn the world, but to save the world." He came to be the Saviour and not the Judge. In talking to his disciples he seldom spoke of punishment. His severe and awful words were drawn from him by the reckless actions of wicked men. His great parables of judgment were all spoken within a week of the end of his life. It was only after the nation had rejected him that he told men plainly of their awful doom.

This, then, is the method of Christianity. It speaks of joy and gladness, of light and music, of love and glory. It is not until men have turned their backs upon all these that it utters the dark word, "Woe!" When a little girl is trying her very best to be good, the mother never speaks to her of punishment. Why should a little maiden trying to be good be tormented with any thought of penalty? It is only when the girl becomes thoughtless or wayward or rebellious that the mother ventures to hint of the possible consequences of transgression. Christian mothers follow instinctively the method

of the New Testament, and Christian preachers in our day are doing the same.

It is sometimes asserted that preachers do not preach retribution any longer; that the heinousness of sin has been lost sight of; that the severity of God is a superstition long outgrown. The answer to all this is that ministers to-day do not give the place to retribution which was given by the preachers of a hundred years ago, because the preachers of a hundred years ago departed from the method of the New Testament. Retribution is still taught, and that, too, with earnestness and plainness in every genuinely Christian pulpit; but it is taught now with the proportion and balance of the New Testament, and not with the exaggerated emphasis which disfigured the preaching of a preceding generation. The majority of men and women who meet together on the Lord's Day to hear a Christian minister preach are men and women who are trying to be good. They try with different degrees of earnestness and with varying degrees of success. The very fact, however, that they are in a Christian church is presumptive evidence that they want to be better than they are.

The supreme business, then, of a Christian preacher is to give encouragement and cheer, to light up the shadows of daily experience by expositions of the upper glories, to give instruction in the ways of righteousness that it may be easier to be good. But while this is the substance of a minister's

preaching, the idea of retribution is always in the background. A true preacher always moves on the assumption that he is dealing with matters of life and death, that sin is a heinous thing, and that it makes a vast difference whether men choose the evil or the good. In every congregation there are those who are careless. Some are reckless, some are growing worse. There are young men who are dallying with temptation, toying with sin, playing with fire. There are hardened Agrippas who need to be told of judgment to come. And so on occasional Sundays the minister will turn aside from pleasant themes and call attention to the darkness of the road that leads to death.

It is sometimes said that ministers no longer preach hell. This is said in a tone which condemns. The natural inference is that preachers are ashamed of the New Testament and Jesus of Nazareth, and are leaving out an important part of what he commanded his disciples to preach. Do the preachers of to-day leave out hell? What do you mean? If you mean the word "hell," then they certainly leave hell out. If you mean the truth for which that word "hell" stands, then it can confidently be asserted that no true preacher leaves it out. Why has the word "hell" been banished from the pulpit? Because men are ashamed of it? No. It has been banished because it has changed its meaning. Our King James's version says: "Take no thought for your life. Take no thought for the morrow." It

is almost wicked to read such sentences to a congregation in our day. They misrepresent the Lord's meaning. He never said, "Take no thought for your life;" his word was, "Be not anxious for your life." The word "damnation" has changed its meaning. It ought to be eliminated from the New Testament because it misleads. When you and I hear the word "hell," we give it the Miltonic meaning, not the meaning which it had when Jesus spoke the word "Gehenna." We might say that Paul dropped the word "hell." It does not occur in any of his letters. Gehenna was a Hebrew word. It meant a definite thing to the ears of Hebrews. Paul preached to the Gentile world, and he never used the word a single time, and yet he believed and taught retribution. It is not necessary for preachers nowadays to use the word "hell." It has been so spoiled by bad usage it ought to be banished from the Bible and the pulpit. Let us now see what the New Testament doctrine of retribution is.

Sin is punished. Every sin is punished. Every sin is punished inevitably. We live in a moral universe; everything about it is moral from top to bottom. When the New Testament speaks of penalty, there are no wavering intonations, no interrogation points. Lines are drawn straight. The wayfaring man, though a fool, is not allowed to be deceived at this point. There are two gates, one narrow and one wide. There are two roads, one narrow and one broad. There are two goals,

one is life and the other is destruction. There are two directions, one leads to eternal punishment, the other to life eternal. The morality of the universe is expressed in the great sentence, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Sin is punished naturally, not mechanically, not arbitrarily. All is in accordance with law. Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. If he sows to the flesh, he reaps corruption. If he sows to the spirit, he reaps life eternal. The processes which go on in the wheat field are no more natural and inevitable than are the processes which go on in the life and decay of souls. Sins grow as virtues do: first the blade and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. If a fruit tree does not bring forth good fruit, it is cut down and gotten out of the way. At harvest time the tares are separated from the wheat and burned. When a fisherman brings to land a net full of fishes, he throws away those that are good for nothing. The New Testament says that the same common sense which is exercised by men in their ordinary occupations will be made manifest in the government of the world. The punishment of sin is sensible and natural.

Sin is punished fairly, impartially, equitably. Christianity knows nothing of a great pit into which all sinners are swept indiscriminately. The

justice of God is perfect. The punishments of earth are all vitiated by human infirmity. Parental discipline is often partial, unreasonable. A child is punished too severely for some misdemeanors, not severely enough for others. Our legal system is like a great net full of holes — many guilty men escape. It is impossible in any court of justice to give every man his exact deserts. But in the divine government there is no such thing as blundering. The punishment is so just that it becomes beautiful. There is no such thing as shamming. We cannot palm off professions before God. Many shall say to him, "Lord, Lord, but . . ." There is no such thing as making excuses to God. We may say, "When saw I thee an hungered?" and the answer will be, "You saw very clearly what you ought to have done."

All sins are not equally heinous. All bad tempers are not nourished to the same degree, consequently penalties are graded. Jesus brought out this fact again and again. He declared it would be more tolerable in the day of judgment for some cities than for others. He said that some servants would be beaten with many stripes, other servants with only a few. In the Sermon on the Mount he says that a man guilty of a certain sin will be in danger of the judgment; a man guilty of a more serious one will be in danger of the council; a man guilty of a still greater sin will be in danger of Gehenna fire. That is the Hebrew way of putting things. The

local court had a right to cut a man's head off; the Sanhedrin had the power to stone a man to death, and if the criminal was of the worst type, the council could order his body thrown into the deep ravine south of the city along with the carcasses of animals and the corpses of criminals. This Hebrew speech of Jesus translated into the dialect of to-day would run as follows: Some sins will bring you to the jail, other sins will bring you to the penitentiary, other sins will bring you to the electric chair.

The New Testament never wearies insisting on the fact that every man is dealt with according to his deserts. We are to receive the things done in the body. We are to be judged according to what we have done. Every man is to be rewarded or condemned according to his deeds. Moreover, all extenuating circumstances are to be taken into account. Talents differ. God does not forget this. One man has five talents, another two, another one. That will not be forgotten in making up the account. Opportunities differ. Some men are called at the third hour, some at the sixth, and some at the ninth. That is not forgotten at the end of the day. Industry differs in different men. Some men will increase their one pound to ten, others will increase their one pound to five; other men will not increase their pound at all. All this is taken into account, and a thousand other things which we have never thought of will enter into the divine judgment. Penalty is inflicted with an even

hand. Divine justice is so just it becomes glorious. No sinner will ever say he was punished beyond his deserts.

The consequences of sin are terrible; they are fearful beyond expression; they are awful beyond the reach of thought. There is only one frightful thing in the universe, and that is sin. It is worth while for a man to keep clear of it at all hazards and at all costs. Any suffering which a man can inflict on another is nothing compared with the suffering that sin brings. The loss of any part of the body is insignificant compared with the loss which sin brings to the soul. If your right eye causes you to sin, get rid of it. In order to make this clear, Jesus used all the dark symbols which the language of his day afforded. It has often been noted that the most direful things said in the New Testament are said by our Lord himself. God has laid upon him the unpopularity of this whole doctrine. Peter and John and Paul have very little to say about punishment. It looks as though God would not trust any one else except his Son to talk about things so momentous. He knew that a dark word from Jesus' gracious lips would weigh more than one dropped from the lips of any prophet or apostle. Here are some of the symbols which Jesus used: "Weeping," — tears have in every land and time been the symbol of grief. "Gnashing of teeth," — the Orientals give vent to their emotions more freely than do we. In

passions of remorse or chagrin or disgust they gnash their teeth. Jesus picked up the expression and used it as a symbol. "Outer darkness," — darkness has no terror for us. There is no darkness. We live in an electric light age, we have banished the night. Jesus was speaking to Jews, they were afraid of the dark. The outer darkness struck terror to their hearts. He used the words as a symbol. Down in the ravine of Gehenna the carcasses of animals were devoured by worms. He used the worm as a symbol. The worst punishment known to the pagan world was being sawn asunder. Jesus used the punishment as a symbol. He spoke of destruction, of perishing, of eternal punishment. Certainly language can go no farther. That God is severe in his punishment of sin, the New Testament does not allow any man to doubt.

The penalty of sin does not exhaust itself this side the grave. What we are in this world we are going to be in the next. He that is righteous here will be righteous there. He that is filthy here will be filthy there. There is no alchemy in the experience which we call death to change the temper of the soul. Memory goes with us, and memory to a transgressor of God's law is a tormenting flame.

The penalties of sin become more grievous on the other side of death than here. Tares and wheat are allowed to grow together here, they will be separated there. Fishes, good and bad, are allowed to stay in the net together until the net is

brought to shore. There will be a separation when we reach that other land, and with the separation must of necessity come chagrin, suffering, shame, woe unspeakable. Moreover, sins like seeds bring forth their harvests at different periods. Some seeds sprout quickly, grow to maturity early. The harvest is in the barn before the season is over. Other seeds sprout slowly. Months must elapse before the farmer can see what his harvest is going to be. So it is with sins. As Paul puts it, some men's sins are evident, going before to judgment, other men they follow after. Drunkenness and lust are sins of the flesh, they grow rapidly. The harvest comes speedily. These sins when carried to excess bring torments of the body which cannot be described. These sins are evident, going before to judgment.

But there are other sins, such as vanity, frivolity, envy, greed, hate, cruelty, inhumanity, dishonesty, meanness, irreverence; these sins also are heinous, but the full harvest is not reached in this world. It is only in the spirit world that it is possible to know what these sins really are. This is the teaching of the parable of Dives and Lazarus. Dives was a wicked man, and he had a part of his punishment in this world, but not all. He had a hard heart, and that truly is a punishment most terrible. To have a heart that cannot feel, that is retribution. But Dives's retribution was still greater on the other side of death. Death like a fire burnt up his fine linen and his banquet table. Death burnt up the rags

of Lazarus and also his sores. In the next world there was no linen, no banquet, no rags, no sores, only two men, and one of the two was in torment. While in this world that man had been inhuman, and inhumanity brings its complete penalties only after death.

Up to this point everything is clear. Thus far the teaching of Christianity is unmistakable, indisputable. Thus far it is certainly reasonable, worthy of the mind and the heart of God. Up to this point the church universal is agreed. All divisions and branches of Christendom — Catholics, Protestants, Lutherans, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Unitarians, Universalists, Swedenborgians — agree that these six propositions can be supported by New Testament teaching. As soon as we pass beyond these, however, we enter the realm of speculation, and Christian scholars begin to differ. The human mind is alert and marvellously curious, and the heart has obstinate questionings which will not be silenced. The New Testament is too reserved. Jesus is too reticent. Our soul cries out for completer knowledge.

It is in trying to answer these questions to which the New Testament gives no clear and unmistakable answer that Christians have gotten into age-long disputes and have befogged not only themselves but others. Christianity has been so completely covered over with the speculations of men in regard to matters with which Jesus of Nazareth did not care

to deal that many a man has not been able to see just what Christianity really teaches. For instance: Who will be saved? What men will enter heaven? What is the condition of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and the great and good men who lived before Jesus came? What will be God's dealings with the men in pagan lands to whose ears the name of Jesus never came? Christianity does not allow us to make out any list either of the saved or the lost. We cannot say certainly of any man that he is sure to go to heaven, nor can we say of any man that he can never enter eternal blessedness. The New Testament dissuades us from all such speculation. "Judge not," it says, "that ye be not judged."

What shall be the nature of the blessedness of the blessed, and what shall be the nature of the suffering of the wicked? The New Testament gives no answer. We know nothing of the spiritual body and nothing of its spiritual environment. How then can we say what are the possibilities of either joy or woe in the world which we call eternal?

How many will come back to the Father's house, and how many will not return? The New Testament has no answer. When you hear it said that Christianity teaches that the majority of the human race will be lost, you may say that Christianity teaches nothing of the sort. Fortunately for us an inquisitive man once said to Jesus, "Are there few that be saved?" and the quick reply was, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." Whenever we begin

to figure about the other world, we are wasting time which ought to be used in more profitable ways.

How long will penalty endure? What will be the end of sinners? That is one of the most interesting of all questions which the soul can ask. It has tormented, probably, more Christians than almost any other. To this question four answers have been given, all of them by great scholars, noble saints whose loyalty to the Lord cannot be questioned. The very fact that four different answers can be given by earnest, consecrated Christian men with the New Testament before them is conclusive proof, to my mind, that it is not within the scope of the New Testament revelation to give us a clear and final answer to this question. The duration of penalty is not a matter of revelation then, but a subject for speculation.

Almost from the beginning of the Christian church able Bible students have believed and taught that all souls will some day return to the Father's house, that no matter how widely they may have gone astray, or how deep they may have fallen into sin, they will at last, having paid the full penalty of their transgression, come back to the Father's house and enter into the blessedness which he has prepared for those who love him. And this belief is not without support, both in Scripture and in reason. When Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," did he mean all,

or only some? And when Paul in writing to the Philippians said that God had given Jesus a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, are we to take his words literally, or are we to say that some knees will never bow and some tongues will never confess?

Paul is wonderfully free in his use of the word "all," and it is to his letters that the restorationists have always gone for consolation. Such expressions as, "So in Christ shall all be made alive" and "That God may be all in all," are scattered plentifully through his letters; and if his language is to be taken literally, there is a doctrine of universalism which cannot easily be overturned. But the strongest argument of the restorationists is not Scripture, but an inference from the revealed character of God. They say if God is love, and if God is omnipotent, then every finite will must sooner or later surrender, for it is unthinkable that infinite love should ever be defeated.

In answer to all this it can be said that in none of the passages in which the word "all" is used, either by Jesus or his apostles, is the idea of the duration of punishment under discussion. It is always hazardous to draw inferences concerning a thing from language which is spoken concerning something altogether different. And as for the

argument from the nature of God, it can be said in reply that we do not know what is the power of resistance in the human will, nor do we know how fatal is the malignity of sin. Possibly the weakness of philosophic restorationism has never been more clearly stated than by Dr. F. H. Hedge, "It assumes," he says, "an inevitable triumph of self-recovery — a fatality of goodness in man which seems to be based on no analysis of human nature, which certainly is not warranted by any mundane experience, and whose only voucher, so far as we can see, is a brave hope, which, however honorable to those who cherish it, is of no great use in the critical investigation of this subject."

There are others who say that souls can become incorrigible, and that the fate of all incorrigible souls is extinction. Only those live forever who live in Christ, all others perish. This belief is based on arguments drawn both from Scripture and from reason. For instance, the fire into which the tares are thrown does not purify, it consumes. And the fires which were kept burning in the valley of Hinnom consumed the refuse with which they were fed. Moreover, if we give Christ's words the significance which they possess in everyday speech, what are we to understand by a sentence like this, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction?" Does not destruction mean dissolution? Or a sentence like this, "God so loved the world, that he gave

his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish." Does not perish mean disintegrate? Or what shall we do with such assertions as these, "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

There are many words of Jesus which taken at their face value would seem to indicate that only those exist forever who live in him. Moreover, does not Paul say that he suffers the loss of all things in order that he may win Christ, and that his constant effort is to know him and the power of his resurrection, if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead? And what seems thus suggested by Scripture finds many confirmations in reason. If the incorrigibly wicked finally pass out of existence, the same process is continued in the spiritual world with which scientists have made us familiar in the animal and vegetable creations.

There is such a thing in nature as the survival of the fittest. Only those species continue to exist which bring themselves into harmonious relation with their environment. May it not be so with souls? To know God is life eternal, and not to know him is dissolution and extinction. If only the good finally survive, we have at last a universe without spot and without wrinkle. The dualism

against which the philosophic mind rebels, has been done away with, and we have a universe without a shadow and without a stain. But this again is largely speculation. If it be true, as the Scriptures assert, that man is created in the image of God, how can we be sure that he is any less eternal than God who made him?

There are others who shrink from the awful thought of the extinction of the soul, and yet who do not dare to affirm that every soul will at last attain to the beatific vision. These persons lay emphasis upon the love of God and upon the freedom of the will. They assert that God's mercy endures forever, and this being so the door is open forever. The return of the prodigal to the Father's house is always a possibility. Therefore, while it is presumption to say that all souls will certainly return, it is not beyond our privilege to hope that every soul will sooner or later choose the right. Since the love of God is eternal, there is room for eternal hope. A quarter of a century ago, Frederick W. Farrar, in a series of sermons delivered in Westminster Abbey, proclaimed this eternal hope in tones which have ever since been vibrating around the world.

But up to the present time the majority of Bible students have been driven to the conclusion that the Scriptures do not allow us to expect that all souls will eventually be saved. That there are souls which will endure forever and be fixed in a

state of unblessedness has much in its support in the Scripture, and is not without support in reason. There is a tone of finality in the gospels which every sensitive heart must feel. Men are left in outer darkness, and not a word is spoken of their return. The gulf is fixed. Dives cannot pass from one side to the other. The tares are separated from the wheat; they are never again mingled. Useless fish are thrown away and are never picked up again. The evil tree is cut down, and is no longer allowed to cumber the ground. There is such a thing as an eternal sin, and at the judgment day some pass to eternal punishment and others to life eternal.

The New Testament does not allow us to get away from the fact that it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment; and the human heart listening to the message, and unspoiled by speculation, instinctively cries out, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Moreover, what seems to be intimated in the Scriptures is borne out by experience and by reason. We know that in this world bad men can become fixed in their wickedness. We also know that there are souls so in love with evil that they resist steadfastly all the persuasions of love up to the point where death receives them from our sight. Nor is it an offence to reason to believe that the human soul is of such dignity and stature that it has the power to resist God forever. No other theory of the final

condition of souls does such justice to the majesty of man as this one. One theory makes him so cheap that he can be dissolved, another theory makes him so weak that suffering will break down his powers of resistance and bring him back to God. But if we say that it is possible for a soul to be lost forever, then we are asserting that the power of resistance in the human will is immeasurable, and that man has been intrusted with so much liberty that he can defy the king of heaven forever!

To think, then, that it is possible that some souls may never be saved, is neither barbarous nor preposterous. Think twice before you laugh at people who believe that that is the teaching of the Scriptures. It is easy to caricature this belief, and people who have the most to say against eternal punishment usually direct their thunderbolts against ideas which are not a part of the doctrine at all. One man says, "How preposterous it is that God should punish a man forever for a few sins which he has committed within the limits of the three-score years and ten of his earthly pilgrimage!" That does not state the case fairly. Nobody believes that a man will be punished forever for the sins he has committed on earth. If any man is punished forever, it will be simply because he sins forever. It is too frequently taken for granted that it will not be possible for a man to sin in the other world. The question is, Is there such a thing as unending sin? You cannot answer that

question with a sneer. Another man says that the whole idea of endless punishment is abominable, because we cannot think of a father punishing a child forever. This sounds plausible, but it is shallow. The relation of the child to his earthly parent is not the relation of a soul to God. The punishments which an earthly parent may inflict are all of them superficial. A child may be whipped, or he may be shut up, or certain privileges may be denied him; but no punishment which the father can inflict reaches the fibre of the mind or the structure of the soul.

Sin, however, is an acid which eats into the mind, it is a poison which runs through the blood of the soul. If a child puts out his eyes, his earthly father cannot restore them. The question is, Is it possible for the soul to put out its eyes? Every now and then somebody announces with great eclat that if he should find himself in heaven, and should know that there was only one soul in the outer darkness, he would immediately leave the heavenly mansion and go out in search of the one that was lost. This has a Christian sound, and seems quite beautiful to those who have not yet learned to think. If a man thinks he is saying something when he is saying nothing, he deceives himself and also may deceive others. A man who talks about leaving heaven and going out after a soul that is lost, has conceptions of heaven and Gehenna which are worthy of the nursery. It is not so easy to pass from the home

of the blessed to the home of the wicked as all such speeches would indicate. There is no reason for thinking it will be any easier to cross the awful gulf which yawns between goodness and badness in the other world than it is to cross the gulf which yawns between good and evil in this world.

There is a man in the penitentiary at Sing Sing. He is a vicious, hardened criminal. He was brought up in a Christian home, went to church, and was a member of the Sunday-school. But in his youth he fell in with bad companions. They led him astray. He trampled under his feet many of the commandments of God. By and by he married. In time there were children round the table. The early habits of the father did not melt away in the atmosphere of the home; he continued his drinking. One day, in a fit of anger, he so injured his little boy that the boy died. The matter was hushed up, and the police never knew the tragedy of the home. The mother knew it; she sickened and died. The man grew more desperate with the years. At last his mother's heart broke under the weight of his accumulating sins. He sank from bad to worse until, at last, in a dark moment, he killed a man. They sent him to the penitentiary, and there he is, vicious, hardened, devilish. Can you go from your lovely home to where that man is? It is easy to take the train for Sing Sing; it is easy to enter the cell; it is easy to take the man in your arms. But have you reached him? Are

you where he is? No. You cannot reach him; you cannot get where he is. The gulf is fixed. He has sinned so far that he has become sin. He is an organized appetite. He is an incarnate lust. His soul is fixed in evil, and you cannot reach him.

But to say that in any case the lost condition is unending, is pure speculation. The Scriptures do not make it plain beyond question. This may seem a reckless statement to those who have always supposed that *eternal* must of necessity mean unending. But the word "eternal" is not so unambiguous as it seems. In the gospel of John it is sometimes used in the sense of spiritual. The word expresses quality sometimes rather than quantity. And even when the idea of duration lies in the word, it is not possible to tell how far the duration extends, for the ancients used the word "eternal" as freely as we do. They spoke about the everlasting hills, and the everlasting stars, and so do we, although we know that hills and stars will some day have an end. We do not speak of the eternal flowers or trees or the eternal houses, because all these things have an end which is in sight. Anything whose end is not in sight is to us eternal, and in a single sentence we might apply the word "eternal" to an object which will some day end, and also to an object whose existence is unending. We might, for instance, speak of the eternal stars of the eternal God. It is because of the ambiguity which lurks in the Greek word *aionion*, translated some-

times in the King James's version by "everlasting," and in our revised version by the word "eternal," that it is impossible to affirm with absolute certainty that the penalties spoken of in the gospel will never come to an end. All that we can say is that in the teaching of Jesus penalty has no end which is in sight.

What, then, is the difference between the teaching of the Universalist church and the teaching of the Evangelical church? It is often said that there is no difference at all. It has been frequently asserted that the Universalist church does not grow in this country because it is no longer needed. All churches, some people tell us, have passed over to the Universalist platform and all preachers hold Universalist doctrine, even if they do not preach it. People who speak thus speak recklessly. It is not true that the churches of this country have passed over to the Universalist position. A Universalist church is built on the assumption that all souls, no matter how long or how grievously they sin, are absolutely certain at some time or other to enter into eternal blessedness. It is a cardinal doctrine in the Universalist creed that it is impossible to sin to such a degree as that the beatific vision may be lost. Universalist ministers, when they are true to their creed, do not hesitate to stand in their pulpit and say with Theodore Parker, that there is not in the human family a son of perdition, and that every prodigal, no matter how far

he wanders, will sooner or later find his way back to the Father's house. I do not see how men can say that. I cannot understand how they know enough to be able to say that. Certainly all such assertions run beyond the limits of what is written. How can any man know the power of resistance in the human will? And how dare any man assert that sin, no matter how long continued in, can finally be escaped?

What do the Evangelical churches do? They leave the whole matter just where Jesus left it. The New Testament leaves certain sinners in the outer darkness. The Christian church leaves them there too. If there is a way of putting an end to that darkness, God alone knows it, and if it is possible to do it, he will do it. The New Testament leaves men on both sides an impassable gulf. The New Testament does not bridge the gulf. The Christian church does not bridge it. If there is a way to bridge it, God alone knows how. If it is possible to do it, he will do it. According to the New Testament, some go into eternal punishment and some into life eternal. If there is a way by which the soul can pass from punishment to life, God alone knows it. The Christian church has not had that way revealed. The Christian church then at the beginning of the twentieth century takes the words of Jesus and neither adds to them nor subtracts from them. In the creed of the church of which we are members, we simply quote Jesus'

words and allow every member to put upon those words what interpretation seems most in accord with all we know of God and man. It is not hard to leave the matter here, for is not God our Father, and does he not know our frame? And is not Christ our Brother, and has he not been tempted in all points even as we are? And shall not the judge of all the earth do right?

XI

THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

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THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

"The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." — 1 Timothy iii: 15.

"I BELIEVE in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints." A few moments ago we repeated in concert those words, and since this morning's sun rose they have been on the lips of tens of thousands of Christian people. For fifteen hundred years they have been constantly repeated by a large proportion of the entire Christian church, and to most of us they have been familiar since the days of childhood. What do the words mean?

We do not necessarily understand words because they are familiar. Expressions often become so smooth that they slip through the mind without communicating any message. What do we mean when we say "holy church"? The word "holy" has two meanings in the Bible. It sometimes means sinless; it always means sinless when applied to God. When we say, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" we confess his sinlessness. But holy does not always mean sinless in the

Scriptures. We read of the holy day, the holy place, the holy temple, the holy Scriptures, the holy people, the holy nation, the holy things. Any person or anything dedicated to the service of Almighty God is counted holy. The holy church, therefore, is not a sinless church, but a church consecrated to the service of the Almighty.

The word "Catholic" also has two meanings,—one historic and the other sectarian. Catholic is a Greek word meaning whole, universal, entire. In the early centuries of Christian history Christians were not agreed as to what writings should constitute the Scriptures. Some discarded the writings of Paul; some cared little for the gospels; some thought the Old Testament was sufficient; others would accept nothing but the New. But the majority of Christians demanded a Catholic Bible, a Bible expressing the whole truth, and the church became known as Catholic because of the universality of its teaching.

In the course of time the church became extended throughout several continents. In order to distinguish the great body of professing Christians from smaller bodies that sprang up here and there, the word "Catholic" took on a deeper meaning, and the church was Catholic not only because it embraced in its teaching the whole truth, but because it extended throughout the world. But the word "Catholic" may be used also in a sectarian sense. The Christians whose supreme bishop is the Bishop of

Rome have taken that name to themselves. When a Roman Catholic says he believes in the Catholic church, he uses the word in a sectarian sense, confining his thought simply to the church of which the Pope is the head. When we use the word, we give to it its historic significance. It calls up before our mind the church universal. The Holy Catholic Church, therefore, means the universal church consecrated to the service of God.

The word "saint" also has two meanings, — the ancient and modern. According to the modern meaning a saint is a Christian who has been canonized by the church, or a Christian preëminent in piety. But in New Testament times every professing Christian was called a saint. It is the common name which St. Paul applies to all the followers of Jesus. "The saints salute you." "Salute all the saints." Such are common expressions in his letters. The expression, "Communion of saints," then means the society of the professed followers of Jesus. The Holy Catholic Church is the universal society of believers. When we say each Sunday morning that we "believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints," we are simply asserting our belief in the Christian society. But the Christian society exists in two forms. It is a fact and it is also a dream. It is actual and it is also ideal. When we say we believe in the church, we are to think not simply of the church of history, or of the church as it exists

to-day, but we are to think of the church which is to be, the church as it exists in the mind of God, the church as contemplated in the consummation of his far-reaching plans. Over the top of the church as it is we are to see the glory of the church which is without spot and without wrinkle. As Fairbairn puts it, "The church is the symbol of the completed work of Christ."

The Apostles' Creed is not peculiar in giving place to an expression of belief in the church. All the great creeds of Christendom include the Christian church as one of the integral features of the Christian religion. Its importance is acknowledged in the Nicene Creed, and in the Athanasian Creed. It has its place in the Augsburg Confession of the Lutherans, and the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians, and the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. Christians of every land and time have felt that their creed would be incomplete without a declaration concerning their loyalty to the church of the Living God.

And in this the Christians of the world have acted wisely, for the New Testament is full of the glory of the church. There are only two objects in the Scriptures of supreme importance, — one is Jesus Christ and the other is his church. In the gospels the church is in process of formation. Not much is said about it, for it has not yet been developed into a form by which it can appeal to the

imagination and the heart. The only Christian church in the gospels is the apostolic band, and upon this little company of twelve men Jesus lavishes a large part of the wealth of his time and thought and love. As soon as he finds a man who is willing to say, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God," Jesus declares that he is now ready to begin to build his church and asserts that the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. From that day in Cæsarea Philippi down to the last evening in the upper chamber Jesus gave himself with unflagging industry to the perfecting of his church. To weld these twelve men together, to knit their hearts together, to mould them into a compact and conquering brotherhood, this was the supreme ambition of all his days. Around these twelve men, others were gradually organized, and on the day of Pentecost we find a church of one hundred and twenty members ready to make its appeal to the world.

From the day of Pentecost onward the church is always in our sight. The book of the Acts takes delight in telling us how it fares with the churches. Luke, by the manner of his writing, assures us that, like his friend Paul, he loves the church which Jesus has purchased with his blood. As soon as we enter the epistles of St. Paul, there is only one institution which is commanding and glorious, and that is the church. The man who at one time had made havoc of the church now bankrupts language in his

efforts to find metaphors rich enough to symbolize to men's minds something of the significance which he sees in the Christian society. He passes from metaphor to metaphor in his desire to find a figure which will vividly body forth his thought. The church, he says, is a family; at another time he declares it is the household of faith; again he calls it a temple, the very shrine of the eternal; again he calls it the pillar and the ground of the truth, that by which the truth is supported, and made regnant in the world; again he calls it the body of Christ, and elaborates his conception in the most marvellous manner; again he personifies it, and calls it a bride, the bride of God's only Son.

But all these figures together do not exhaust the meaning of its nature or its function. It is a medium of revelation, an organ of the Almighty in which both men and angels are to behold the manifold wisdom of God. Paul will not allow himself to be discomfited or cast down by the conceited and quarrelsome and worldly minded churches with which he has to do. Over all the disheartening facts of present life he gazes down the vista of the centuries, and there the church stands erect in robes of glory like a lovely woman waiting for the bridegroom. Nor is Paul alone in this exalted conception of the Christian church. Open that wonderful book, the book of the Revelation, full of mysterious colors and thunders, a book of conflict and convulsion and catastrophe and warfare, full

of blood and horror and darkness, and at the very beginning we hear a voice speaking to the churches. They are stars which Christ holds in his hands, they are candlesticks in the midst of which he walks. They are to furnish light to the race which has lost its way. And after we have passed through the tumults and crises of the book we come at last to one final and splendid vision of the church. Now it is a city, a New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. It is worth noting that both Paul and John, when they think of the church at her best, think of a beautiful woman in the hour of her most fascinating loveliness waiting for the bridegroom.

But when we come out of the New Testament into the twentieth century, we find ourselves in a different atmosphere. In the New Testament all the voices unite in saying, "We believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints." It is the bride of the Lamb to which is given glory and honor. It is the church of the Living God, and in its presence men speak in tones that are reverent and loving. But the atmosphere of the modern world is full of scepticism. "What is the use of the church?" men say, and they say it in a tone which gives an answer. "Is not religion a matter entirely between the soul and God? Is the church an essential part of the Christian religion? Cannot a man be a good Christian, and remain un-

identified with the church? Can he not be loyal to Christ and still hold aloof from the Christian society? Is it not enough to live the Sermon on the Mount and establish its principles in one's life? What more does God ask or can man expect than that we should love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourself?"

There is probably no other article in the Christian creed against which so many plausible things can be said as against the article which declares our allegiance to the church. This scepticism proceeds to different lengths in different men. One man believes in the church to the extent of attending and supporting its services, thinking it is a good thing, a useful and necessary thing, nevertheless he will not ally himself with it. Church membership is not one of the Christian duties, the church is not an integral part of the religion which Christ came to establish. Other men believe in the church just as they believe in the police force. The police force is necessary and must be supported to maintain order, and to keep society sane and healthy. The Christian church, a religious police force, must also be supported. But a man may believe in the police force and not be willing to become a policeman himself. So there are men who believe in the Christian church who refuse to become church members. There are others who consider the church a necessary institution, but they look down upon it as a sort of kindergarten intended for the development

of the young and the ignorant and the poor. Just as some of us consider the Sunday-school not an institution for adults, but intended primarily for little children, so many persons outside the church look upon the church as a society exceedingly beneficial for the training of the wayward and the immature, but in which educated, full-statured men need have no part. If a man is ignorant, weak, lonesome, struggling against bad habits, then by all means let him join the church. Men of strength and full-orbed character may pass by on the other side. There are others who would go still farther and sweep the church away altogether. They cannot speak of it except in tones of scorn. To them it is a nuisance, an impertinence, a stumbling-block, a yoke of bondage, a curse. It is a breeding-place for hypocrites and bigots, an institution of tyranny, a survival of a bygone age, something to be eliminated before humanity can pass onward into an era of liberty and love. Such was the doctrine which Zola taught with enthusiasm and distinction.

In a world so filled with scepticism concerning the value of the Christian church, it is a great thing which we do every Sunday morning when we stand upon our feet and repeat together our belief in the holy universal church. On every hand there are men reputable, respectable, educated, honored, who say in editorials, magazines, books, and conversation, "We do *not* believe in the univer-

sal church." Against this unbelief of the world we hurl our solid declaration, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints."

Why do we believe in it? The world challenges us at this point, and we must be ready with our answer. Let me suggest this morning the general features of an answer which every Christian may reasonably make.

Man is a social being. He is made for society. He cannot live his life alone. If he tries to do so, he remains dwarfed and stunted. We are dependent on one another. We are dependent on others for our physical life. A savage might live for a time in the woods on roots, unassisted by other men, but a savage is only a fragment of a man, an embryonic man who has not yet begun to live. The physical life of civilized man is made possible by the co-operation of his fellows. A thousand men labor together to produce our dinner. We are dependent upon others for our mental life. The stimulus which sets the wheels of the mind in action comes from contact with other minds. Our intellectual life has not been built up in solitude. It has been built up by the coöperation of many teachers. Our spiritual life also is drawn from others. Faith and hope and love do not drop into the soul out of some shining cloud; they are borne to us on the loving accents of friendly voices. Society is indeed an organism, and each man is a part of the general body. No one lives to himself, and no one dies to

himself. A man becomes a man only as his life is merged in the life of others.

A man cannot do his work alone. Trifles may be done without assistance, but the world has never known a mighty work accomplished without coöperation. Men must work together when they wish to do great things. Combination is one of God's great principles upon which the world is organizing its modern life. The miracles which are wrought to-day in the commercial and industrial worlds are possible only because men have learned more completely how to unite their forces. The greater the work attempted, the more necessary it is that men shall be massed. The finer and grander the effects which we aim at, the more necessary becomes whole-hearted coöperation.

If men to do their finest work must work together, then organization is a necessity. Men cannot work together without order. Order cannot live without a body, and the body of order is organization, machinery. The great work of the world must be carried on by institutions. These are not only the homes of ideas, but also the homes of men. Not only are conceptions and men nourished by institutions, but institutions have the power of propagating influences and transmitting them from generation to generation. Up to this point all sane men walk together.

But if no man can live his life alone, how can a Christian live alone? A Christian is only a man

at his best. A man is a Christian when he lives as God intended him to live. The Christian religion teaches us that God is our Father, and that all men are brethren. We are, therefore, members of one great family. We are to love God, and we are also to love man. On these two hang the law and the prophets. A brother is not brotherly if he persists in living by himself. Family life is ruined if every member of the family insists on eating and living his life alone. Family life is impossible unless the members of the family come together. It is not true that religion is a matter entirely of the relation of the soul to God. Our relation to one another is as important as is our relation to God. If we are going to worship, says Jesus, and remember our brother has anything against us, we must first get right with him before we proceed with our worship. Where two or three are together in Christ's name, there he is in the midst. When two are agreed as to any matter, then the thing shall be granted. The New Testament knows nothing of isolated Christians. The New Commandment is that we love one another. "By this shall all men know ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." You can be a savage alone, but not a Christian.

Nor can we do a Christian's work alone. The work of the Christian is of two kinds. His first work is upon himself. He must be rich in Christian graces, but what are the Christian graces? Almost all of them are flowers that blossom only

in society. The Christian society is the school in which the hard lessons are learned. It is there that we receive the discipline without which we are rough and incomplete. What we men need is to have our idiosyncrasies rubbed off, our conceit taken out, our impatience curbed, our selfishness checked, our wilfulness subdued. Where will a man better learn patience and considerateness and forbearance and brotherly kindness than in the Christian church? It is only when we get men and women of all tempers and temperaments, conditions and grades of culture together, that there is scope for the exercise of those virtues which are most pleasing to God.

Moreover, the Christian church is a witness. It must bear testimony to the power of its Lord. What would one solitary voice amount to in a world so noisy as this one is? No single voice, however mighty, can speak the Christian message in a tone that will be heard. The message must be blown through a trumpet, and that trumpet is the Christian church. A million men beaten together into an instrument—that alone is sufficient to carry the good news to a half-deaf world.

Moreover, the church is a soldier. Rightly do we call it the church militant. We are in the midst of a great rebellion. Men everywhere are in insurrection against the laws of the Almighty. It is not true, as superficial people sometimes say, that all men want to do right. Many men want

to do wrong. They love to do wrong. They are determined to do wrong until the end of the day. It is the work of the Christian church to breathe an obedient spirit into the hearts of these rebels, to persuade them to lay down their arms. How is the rebellion to be put down unless men mass themselves together for the mighty conflict? Great ideas never travel in this world alone. They are impotent unless backed up by men. Individual men can avail nothing against the massed forces of aggressive evil. It was a great idea that this Union of ours should be one and inseparable, but how did we carry that idea to the Gulf? Certainly not by the proclamation of isolated voices, nor by the writings of isolated editors, nor by the sermons of isolated preachers. Whenever we have a mighty work to do and want to do it, we say to one another, "Now let us get together and this thing shall go." And so in 1861–2–3, when we were determined that the idea of union should rule from the Lakes to the Gulf, we massed a million men and carried that idea to victory.

The Christian religion has great ideas. They are opposed by the natural heart of man. Large sections of humanity are bitterly hostile to the fundamental principles of the gospel. How shall we carry these ideas to victory unless we put behind them great cohorts of massed men who will march shoulder to shoulder under one flag, and never halt or retreat until the battle has

been won? The finest effects are not possible in the world without coöperation, and it is the aim of the Christian religion to produce fine effects. A single human voice can produce music, and so also can a single instrument; but if we want the great and overwhelming effects of music, we must bring many voices and many instruments together. An individual Christian may do a little work in his own field in his own way, but the mightiest effects that have been produced on the world have been produced by Christians acting together.

If Christians, then, to do their work must get together, we must have church organization. There must be church machinery. The spirit of Christ is too passionate and earnest to remain a disembodied spirit. In this world the spirit of Christ is a yearning to make men better, to bring them into communion with God. We cannot conceive of such a spirit as that walking this earth like a ghost. Let such a spirit take possession of the hearts of a half-dozen men, and immediately they will say to one another, "Let us get together and lay out the plan of our campaign and get other men to help us; let us see what can be done." The Christian church is the inevitable creation of the Christian spirit. The Christian spirit cannot survive without the church any more than a man's spirit can survive in this world without his body. Drop a spark of life anywhere in this world and

it will immediately begin to organize around it a body. Let the spirit of Christ fall upon isolated hearts, and immediately those hearts will want to get together. Burn all the churches in the world with all their Bibles and all their creeds, and let but one spark of the Christian spirit remain, and out of the ashes will come another church; for wherever the spirit of Christ is, there must be the church also. Where Christ is, there is the church.

There have always been men in the world who have had an antipathy to machinery. There are men who do not believe that the state should have a government. These men are known as anarchists. An anarchist is a man who does not believe in machinery. Sometimes he is poor and ignorant and wretched and blasphemous and foul, belching forth slaughter; but not every anarchist is a demon. There are anarchists who are genteel and refined and of beautiful disposition and of high ideal. The worst that can be said against them is that they do not believe in government. "Down with it!" they say. Why? Because many a government has proved tyrannical. "Away with army and navy!" Why? Because they have caused mischief. "Away with the laws!" Why? Because laws have often been unjust. "Away with policemen!" Why? Because policemen have been brutal and been bought with bribes. An anarchist of the respectable type believes in nothing but

ideas. He believes in justice and liberty and the pursuit of happiness just as intensely as you and I do. "Away with machinery," he cries, "and let us have the free play of ideas!" That man is an anarchist in politics. Other men are anarchists in religion. They say: "Give us the ideas of the Christian religion, — the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the Golden Rule, the New Commandment, — all these are beautiful and good, let us have them; but away with your machinery! away with your creeds, your sacraments, your church officials, your church government; let us have nothing but ideas!" We are all agreed that anarchists in politics are mistaken; what shall we think of the anarchist in religion? We all believe that anarchists in politics are dangerous; is an anarchist in religion dangerous?

If we ask what produces anarchists, either in politics or in religion, the answer is, "The abuse of machinery." No man would ever have become an anarchist if government had always been just. Nor would any man have ever become an anarchist in religion if the Christian church had always been true to the law of God. But alas! the Christian church has from the very start been imperfect. She has committed blunders without number; she has been guilty of crimson sins — scarred and stained she is. And men familiar with her history have been ready to cry out in their impatience: "Better no church at all! Why not allow

humanity to cling to the great ideas which fell from the Master's lips?" When men taunt us about the imperfections of the church, what shall we say? Let us frankly confess that the Christian church is a sinner. Every member of the church ought to acknowledge that the church has sinned, and that she sins continually. Like the Publican, there is nothing for her to do but to beat her breast and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

But it must be remembered that imperfection is inevitable in institutions as in men. Consider first of all the material out of which the church is built. She must build herself of men; there is no other material at hand. She opens her doors and asks all sorts and conditions of men to come in. They come, with their limitations, and their prejudices, and their stunted affections, and their narrow sympathies, and their ingrained vices, and their tempestuous passions, and their voracious appetites, bearing with them the inherited weaknesses and inclinations of a thousand generations; and out of such material as this how can you hope to erect a church immaculate and infallible?

The Christian church, because she is the church of God, makes herself of no reputation and takes upon her the form of a servant, and is willing to be found in the likeness of a sinner. She does not pick out the cultivated and beautiful characters of a city. She opens her doors wide and says, "Whosoever will, may come in." Little children

come, and she accepts them, taking the risk of possible future transgressions. Ignorant people come, and she takes them, willing to train them out of their ignorance. People who are crude and rude come, and she accepts them, endeavoring to complete their lives in Christ. If you are ever tempted to criticise the church, remember that it is an earthen vessel; bear in mind that it is made out of dust. As well expect the Mississippi River to sweep southward from its northern source and bear in its bosom no discoloration of the soil through which it flows, as to expect the Christian church to flow through human history and not carry along with it the impurities of the million hearts which have contributed their life to form the volume of its mighty current. The church of God must always show the discolorations of the soils through which it flows.

And remember also the work which the Christian church is called upon to do. It is called upon to fight a tremendous battle with a most desperate and stubborn foe. The church is not on dress parade. It is not in the world to make a show, but to do a work, and instead of counting up her blunders, let us at least occasionally think of the miracles which she has wrought in Jesus' name!

But see how divided the church is, some men say. She is split up into a hundred factions, every

faction full of bitterness and hatred. How can you expect any man to give his devotion to a church which has forgotten all the Lord's teaching concerning the one shepherd and the one fold? In answer to this arraignment, let us say that we acknowledge with humility and with sorrow the rancor and the strife of Christian history, the quarrels and the jealousies, the petty rivalries and unchristian ambitions — all this is sickening enough, but underneath all this there is something for which we may return hearty thanks to Almighty God. The church is not so divided as it seems. Some of the divisions are not deep and do not touch the core. Many of the differences lie largely on the surface and do not transgress the law of Christ. The New Testament knows nothing of any unity except that which is purely spiritual. Christ in the upper chamber prays that his disciples may be one, but he does not ask that they may be one in ritual or in government. His prayer is, "That they may be one in us" — that is, in spiritual life, in love. Love is the basis of the union, and wherever there is love there is unity. Paul has the same idea. He urges his converts to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." In his letter to the Corinthians he reminds his readers that while there are diversities of operations and administrations, there nevertheless is the same spirit.

Now that there is a deep pervading unity run-

ning through the Christian world, no one conversant with the facts can deny. There is no bitterness or rancor or strife in the hearts of the best Christians in any of our denominations. All churches, in their purpose, in their deepest spirit, in their loftiest aspirations, are one. Moreover, why should it be thought a thing so disgraceful that Christians should organize themselves in different ways? We do not wonder that the Germans prefer one form of government, and the Swiss another, and the English another, and the Americans still another. All this is natural and according to the law of God. It is better that there be a variety of governments in order that the genius of each people may be most fully developed.

Why should we not find a variety therefore in the Christian church? Why should not some Christians prefer a monarchy with a Pope as supreme ruler? And why should not other Christians prefer an Episcopacy with bishops and archbishops at the head? Why should not others prefer a series of graded courts, — the session, the presbytery, the synod, the General Assembly — each being a fountain of authority and law? Why should not others prefer democracy, choosing rather to leave all questions in the hands of the people? There is such a thing as division of labor in the industrial and commercial worlds, and we all rejoice in it and think that it is in accordance with the will of the Eternal. Why should there not be a division

of labor in the Christian church? The Roman Catholic church is doing something better than any other church could possibly do it. The Episcopal church is doing something which no other church could do so well. Each denomination has its own special mission, and God reveals himself in many ways lest one good custom might corrupt the world. The Roman Catholic cannot say to the Congregationalist, "We have no need of you." The Congregationalist cannot say to the Episcopalian, "We have no need of you." The Episcopalian cannot say to the Methodist, "We have no need of you." The Methodist cannot say to the Baptist, "We have no need of you." All are necessary. Under all these different administrations and organizations there lives and works the self-same spirit — the Spirit of God. We utter only the truth when we sing: —

> "We are not divided,
> All one body we,
> One in hope and doctrine,
> One in charity."

"But what is the Christian church doing?" somebody asks, with scornful intonation. "Why does not the church do something practical, and something which the world needs to have done?" This is an arraignment which one hears from many quarters, but one which it is not difficult to answer. Men who speak thus usually have in their mind's

eye some specific task which they think the church ought to do. For instance, the church ought to settle strikes. If the church cannot settle strikes, why should there be a church at all? The church ought to put an end to wars. If a church cannot end wars better have no church. The church ought to elect the best candidates to office. If the church does not do this, then let the church lie down and die. The church ought to give ex cathedra announcements in regard to the thousand problems which, like so many frogs, come up out of the Nile of modern life to disturb our complex civilization.

Why does not the church do these things? Because it is engaged in a greater business. The supreme work of the church is to make the human heart right. That is the one thing which she has been given to do. Just in proportion as she does that, does she fulfil her mission. There was a time when the church did just such spectacular things as men still clamor for. There was a time when the head of the church crowned and uncrowned kings and determined the direction in which nations should move. It was all very spectacular and very impressive in its way; but the church in those days committed a great blunder. She exceeded her authority, went into fields where her Lord had never sent her. And by and by she was overwhelmed with disgrace and defeat. Let us hope

the church will never repeat that blunder. The one thing which the world most needs is the new heart. To secure the new birth the church brings all her persuasions and all her powers, and she has no greater victory than the victory she wins when one sinner repents. When the human heart is right there will be no strikes, no wars, no injustices or outrages in the world.

No man can be as brave and strong a Christian as he ought to be unless he keeps before him the glorious vision of the Christian church. Many a man is weak and timid in the Christian ranks because his vision of the church has faded. I wish that I might sketch for you this morning a picture of the church which would kindle your enthusiasm and make you strong. We talk about serving Christ, and ofttimes it means but little. How can you better serve him than by serving the church which is his bride? We talk about making sacrifices for God. He is in need of nothing, why should we sacrifice for him? We never make more grateful sacrifices for him than when we sacrifice for his church.

The glory of the church of God is unique. It is surrounded by a thousand different institutions, but it is unlike them every one. Its great word of invitation is, "Come!" It caught that word from the lips of Jesus. Its cry is: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

It asks no question in regard to how much money a man is worth; not a question does it ask in regard to his education or friends, his place in business or society; not a query does it propound in regard to his influence or his prestige — all it asks is, "Do you want to be a new man in Christ? and if so, come in." In a city like this where there are so many doors that open only to the man whose purse is full, and so many doors that open only to the man who has five talents, and so many doors that open only to the man of high position or social standing, thank God there is one door that opens to the touch of the humblest and poorest of all God's children, and that door is the door of the Christian church.

No other institution makes so broad an appeal, and no other institution speaks the same kind of appeal. All around us there are institutions built upon a basis of profit. That is the basis upon which the commercial world is built. Every store says through its advertisements and through the great displays in its windows: "Ho, every one that wants a bargain, come! If you want the most possible for your money, come!" A large part of the social world is built upon the same basis. What does a club say but: "Ho, every one that wants social advantages, come! Pay your money, and we will give you privileges which you cannot afford to live without." The world of pleasure is built upon the same basis. What does a theatre

say but: "Ho, every one who desires a good evening's recreation, come! Pay your money, and you shall behold something which is worth your seeing." The Christian church stands up in the midst of the stores and clubs and theatres, saying: "Ho, every one who wants to give, come! Ho, every one who believes it is more blessed to give than to receive, come! Are you willing to give time or money or strength or thought or health or prayer or devotion or love, then come. If you are willing to give, then come; if you are unwilling to give, then stand aloof." No one has a right to enter the church of God who has not decided to make it the principle of his life to give himself for others.

And the church carries this appeal to the most extraordinary extreme. "Come and give," it says, "yes, come and sacrifice." Jesus always made it clear that following him meant sacrifice. He would not send out his twelve apostles to preach until he had explained to them that they must be willing to suffer. Nor did he send out the seventy to preach until he had given them similar instructions. Nor would he offer up his last prayer over the twelve in the upper chamber before he had emphasized the fact again and again that in the world they must expect tribulations. This is one of the cardinal elements in his teaching. In the list of the Beatitudes he puts this one: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you

falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." "Ho, every one that wants to suffer, come, and identify yourself with the Christian church." No man can be a man and do a man's work without paying the penalty; no man can speak the Christian message without being misinterpreted and misunderstood; no man can do a piece of Christian work without being criticised and maligned.

You cannot touch an evil man without discovering that you have struck an empire. You cannot pull up one little thing that is wrong in society without discovering that that wrong thing is connected with a great system of evil. I have never known a man to be a positive force in the Christian church, doing his work bravely and with fidelity, who has not been called upon to suffer. "If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me," so said the Master, and in that tone all great leaders speak. Garibaldi said: "Men, I have not called you to pleasure. If you go with me, you will not have an easy time. I cannot promise you wealth or comfort. No, I call you to war, to long marches, to hunger and weariness, to discomforts a thousand fold, to fighting, and even to death. Will you come with me on these terms for our country's sake?"

But what shall be the reward? This is the reward. "Ye are the salt of the earth." You

will keep humanity from rotting. "You are the light of the world." By your shining you will lead men to glorify your Father who is in heaven.

What an appeal, then, the Christian church makes to every earnest-hearted man! One sometimes hears the question, "Why should I join the church?" Let me ask you why you should not join the church? You are not in your right place until you are in the church. Humanity is lost without the church, and therefore you have no right to rob the church of that strength and influence which you could bring into it.

Instead of asking, as some men do, whether the church is needed any longer, I should propound the question, When has the church been more needed? In an age like this, when the problems are crowding thick and fast upon us, problems so complicated and so immense that the human mind in their presence staggers and draws back, when mental bewilderments are so numerous and so awful, is there not need of a strong, immovable institution, which shall bear calm witness to a few great facts and principles upon which the hopes of our humanity depend?

In an age when wealth is increasing in such amazing ways, when gold is piled in mountainous heaps which dazzle the eyes of those who have it not, and harden the hearts of those who have it, do we not need an institution which will keep on repeating the old story of the man who paid

more attention to his barns than to his soul, and the thrilling parable of the man who had fine linen and a hard heart? In an age of machinery, when the ear is filled with the thunder and roar of the turning wheels, and when men are so massed and so used that they tend to become mere contrivances in the colossal engine room of our modern civilization, do we not need an institution which shall keep crying, "Souls! souls! souls!"

And in an age when competition is so intense that it is furious, and when men in order to keep up with their ambitious rivals are tempted to overreach and to do the thing which is not right, and when the managers of corporations are tempted to use men as so many tools, picking them up and casting them off at their own good pleasure, sapping them of their strength and their life, and then throwing them aside as so many waste rags — do we not need an institution which shall force upon men's conscience the fact that every man is a child of God, and that the masters of this world have a Master in heaven?

And in an age which everybody says is materialistic, whose atmosphere is darkened with dust, and whose skies are blackened with clouds which keep out the light of the sun, do we not need an institution to remind us that God is in his heaven and still sits on his throne? And in an age when class hatreds are numerous and bitter, when one man misunderstands the other man, and different

classes seem to be drifting farther and farther apart, should we not be thankful that there is one institution which stands for human brotherhood, which endeavors to realize and to express the fraternal idea, an institution which says in tones that do not falter, "One is your Master, and all ye are brethren."

And in a century when the nations are rivals in the great field of commerce, and when the equipment of war is being rapidly increased, and when one silly tongue wagging on either side the sea can set a thousand silly tongues wagging on the other — is it not a great thing that there is one institution whose business it is to keep repeating the angels' song of peace on earth?

Why should you identify yourself with the Christian church? Because God needs you in the church. But there is a deeper reason. The New Testament always prefers the deep motives. The motive to which the New Testament appeals is that of gratitude. You ought to be in the Christian church because Christ loved you and gave himself for you. Though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor that you through his poverty might be rich.

XII

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

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THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" — 1 Corinthians xv: 55.

It is a great day, and I bring you a great subject, The immortality of the soul. Nothing but a shout of triumph will answer for a text this morning. And I have found one in the most thrilling chapter which St. Paul ever wrote, the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

"If a man die, shall he live again?" It is an old question, as old as the race. It has been settled a thousand times and then unsettled again, and it is just as live a question now as it was at the beginning. Men cannot let it alone. It has a fascination which draws and holds. One age decides it is a question which can never be answered, and therefore should be let alone. The future, they say, is a sphinx, and why should you torment a sphinx to give you answers. But the very next age comes back and throws itself down in front of the sphinx, and says: "O sphinx, tell us your secret. If a man die, shall he live again?" One generation immersed

in business or in pleasure cares nothing for the question. It pushes it aside as a tedious piece of speculation. "One world at a time — this world is good enough for us," so men shout as they hurry on to their business and their pleasure. But the next generation picks up the discarded question and asks with even increased intensity of interest, "If a man die, shall he live again?" A man at one epoch in his life cares nothing for the question. It does not appeal to him. He cares nothing for any question which runs beyond the glowing horizon of this lovely world. But follow that man, and you will find him by and by sitting down with the old question. He, too, is now pondering the problem, "If a man die, shall he live again?" This, I think, is a remarkable phenomenon, that age after age, generation after generation, should ponder the same old question and be unwilling to let it go.

The reason why men will not let this question alone is because death will not let us alone. If we could banish the death angel, we should banish the problem; but so long as death persists in coming and breaking the circle, in darkening the home, in crushing our castles, in putting out the light of the sun, just so long shall we be compelled to discuss the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" For years we do not care to ask the question, it has no interest for us, and then death, like a conqueror, comes stalking through the palace of our life, leaving behind him an empty chair, and in the shadow

which the chair casts the words flash out like the words on the wall of Belshazzar's banquet chamber, and we read them, "If a man die, shall he live again?"

It is surprising that this question should remain through so many ages an open question. Why has man not settled it long ago? Why has the world not been able to give a sharp, decisive No? Certainly appearances are against the probability of a man living after death. Why should a man live beyond the grave? Look at man! What a petty, insignificant creature he is, so frail that he must sleep almost one-third of his time, so fragile that a difference of a few degrees in temperature will wilt him down, so tiny that a fly can choke him, a pin scratch can kill him. Why should such a paltry creature dare to dream of immortality? Look at his mind! How sordid, how narrow are his sympathies, how petty his ambitions, how apparently fruitless his life! Upon what ground can such a creature dare to hope for a life as unending as the life of God?

If we are to be governed by appearances, then by all means let us say, if a man die, he shall not live again. The phenomena of our earthly life are suggestive of annihilation. Watch a man grow old, see his body in the processes of dissolution, his eyes failing, his ears growing dull, his limbs becoming decrepit, his whole strength and substance gradually dissolving away. That a body is doomed to dissolution we know because the awful

process goes on under our very eyes. But the mind itself seems to decay. Memory goes, judgment fails, imagination dies, reason at last totters and falls — the very soul seems to be in the process of dissolution, and if we are to be governed by appearances, then we must say that death ends all. But in spite of the disheartening phenomena of the death chamber, men persist in asking the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?"

Why do not men give the question up? In a scientific age like this, when demonstrative evidence is everywhere demanded, why should men persist in asking a question for which no demonstrative evidence is forthcoming? If the soul lives after death, nobody can demonstrate that fact; it can never be to us any more than a probability. No future event of any sort can be demonstrated scientifically. You cannot demonstrate that the sun will rise to-morrow morning, nor can it be demonstrated that you will reach your home at the close of this service, nor can you prove that your long-tried friend will be faithful to you five years from now. We build all our life on probabilities. We cannot demonstrate anything beyond the reach of our senses, or the powers of the mind. Death passes beyond our reach. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no instrument has grasped the soul of mortal man after his body has decayed. The immortality of the soul cannot be demonstrated, and yet this scientific century of which we are a part is asking the question with more earnestness than

any age since men began to bury in the earth the bodies of their dead.

Since science is able to answer so many questions, why has not science answered this one? It has seemed more than once that science would close the question forever. Every now and then some bold scientist has shouted out with great assurance, "The question has been settled, there is no life beyond the grave." But when we have asked for evidence, we have received an answer which would not stand the test of thought.

The Christian world has received two great frights within the last fifty years. The first man to alarm us was the physiologist. He discovered a wonderful thing. He discovered that there is a closer connection between brain and soul than the ancients ever imagined. It was once counted proper to liken the soul to the tenant in a house, to a passenger on a ship; but the physiologist discovered that those illustrations are not valid. The soul is more than tenant, more than passenger. The soul is inextricably bound up in some mysterious manner with the very substance and fibre of the body. The physiologist discovered that we have different ideas in different portions of our brain. When we think one way, we use the frontal lobe; when we think another way, we use the occipital convolutions; when we think another way, we use the temporal lobes. And if any lobe becomes injured or diseased, our thinking is impaired. The

physiologist discovered that by injuring the brain at a certain point it is possible to change not only the color of a man's thought, but even his moral character also. A man who has lived apparently a saintly life will after an injury of a certain portion of the brain manifest all the qualities of the brute or even the demon. After these things had been demonstrated one man laid it down as an axiom, "No thought without phosphorus." Another man jumped to the bold conclusion that the brain secretes thought just as the liver secretes bile.

When these things were first asserted in the name of science, the Christian church stood affrighted, but the panic was only for a day. The psychologist came forward and told the physiologist that he was speaking beyond the limits of his knowledge. All the facts which the physiologist had discovered did not prove that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. The physiologist had proved that thought is a function of the brain; but there are different kinds of functions, and a function may be productive or it may be transmissive. Light, for instance, is a function of the electric circuit, it is produced by the circuit. Destroy the circuit, and you have no light. The function is productive. And if thought were a productive function of the brain, then the destruction of the brain would of course mean the annihilation of the soul. But there is such a thing as a transmissive function. Music is the function of the organ, but

the music is transmissive. Change the shape and size of the pipes, and you change the quality of the music; injure any one of the pipes, and you cause a deterioration in the tone. But the music, after all, is not produced by the organ, it is produced by the organist, and the music is in the organist and is transmitted to us through the organ pipes. Now the physiologist has never proved that the brain is an electric circuit. How does he know but that the brain is an organ upon whose delicately carved keys of gray the immortal spirit plays life's music? Change the condition of the brain's convolutions, and you indeed change the character of a man's thinking; but behind the organ stands the organist, and though the organ be destroyed the organist lives on. The church is afraid of the physiologist no longer.

The second man who frightened us was the evolutionist. He discovered something that no preceding generation had ever seen so clearly. He found out that we are more intimately related to the animal creation than the ancients had believed. He pointed out the fact that we not only carry along with us many rudimentary organs, which are apparently an inheritance from the animal creation, but that in the mind itself there is a vast inheritance of brute instinct and inclination. When this great truth first broke upon the world on the lips of the apostles of evolution, many men at once leaped to the conclusion that if a man is like an

animal in his origin, he must be like an animal in his death. Men began to use the language of the book of Ecclesiastes: "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they all have one breath; so that a man hath no preëminence above a beast; for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

The panic was a great one, but it lasted only for a week. Now that men have had time enough to think the doctrine of evolution through, it is discovered that probably no other hypothesis ever adopted by scientific men has so fortified the belief in immortality as this doctrine of evolution. For whatever may be said for or against the idea of evolution, it must be admitted that it has enlarged enormously the range of the imagination, it has broken down completely the little wall which we had built up behind us at the distance of six thousand years, and has persuaded us to think of immensities and eternities. It speaks naturally of myriads of ages, and will not allow us to think that either time or space is small. And along with this conception of vastness it has given us the idea of development. It tells us that there is a tremendous sweep upward. In the words of Emerson: —

> "A subtile change of countless rings,
> The next unto the farthest brings;
> And striving to be man, the worm
> Mounts through all the spires of form."

Evolutionists speak of transmitted tendency. They say that through the ages one increasing purpose runs. They note the fact that the whole creation travails and groans in pain, culminating at last in man. Now after evolution has convinced us that we have come so far, it is almost impossible to believe that we are not going any farther. If we have climbed so high, it is perfectly reasonable to believe that we shall climb higher. After all this tremendous outlay and cost, the mind will not believe that the creation bursts like a bubble at death. A creature who is the highest product of millions of years of development is not going to end at the tomb. The Christian church has no longer any fear of the evolutionist.

What has science then to say against the doctrine of immortality? Not one word. What evidence has science to bring against it? Not one shred or scrap. There is no evidence against it, said even John Stuart Mill, one of the keenest-eyed of all sceptics. We must make a distinction between science and scientists. There are scientists who say that there is no future life, just as there are other men who say the same; but they say it, not because of any scientific evidence in their possession, but because of a peculiar bias of the mind. When Haeckel says that the doctrine of evolution compels us to give up belief in the future life, John Fiske very properly points out the fact that he never deduced his belief from the doctrine of evolu-

tion, he is simply echoing the opinion of a French atheist of the eighteenth century. When we deal with the problem of immortality, we are in a region into which science can never go. We are in the world of probabilities. What has philosophy to say? It has many things to say in favor of the future life. It presents not one shred of evidence to prove that the soul is not immortal. Here we must distinguish between philosophy and philosophers. There are philosophers who say that death ends all; but as Fiske has pointed out, the assertion that the life of the soul ends with the life of the body is the most colossal and baseless assumption that is known to the history of philosophy.

Let us look this morning at twelve candles, all of which throw light upon the problem of the soul's immortality. Four of these have been lighted by history, four by philosophy, and four by science. They are the twelve-branched candlestick which stands at the centre of our modern life. Or to change the figure, they are the twelve apostles which go out from the halls of reason to convince the world that if a man die, he shall live again.

Our candles are so many facts, and the first fact is that all tribes and peoples have pictured a life on the other side of death. The belief in another life has been so well-nigh universal, we need take no account of the isolated savage tribes which may have been too low down to enter into this idea, which is the natural possession of the race. Not

only do all peoples now living upon the earth believe that there is something for them beyond the grave, but this has been true in every age of the history of the race. The paleontologist has dug up the bones of men who lived and struggled in the age of ice. Those prehistoric tribes of more than a hundred thousand years ago buried trinkets and utensils in the grave for the use of those whose spirits had left their bodies. That is a colossal fact — a race of beings through a hundred thousand years holding to the belief that the soul does not die at death. It would seem that the human mind is so constructed that it bends in that direction.

The second fact is that this belief survives. Mrs. Browning has said that earth outgrows the mythic fancies sung beside her in her youth. But here is a belief that the earth has never yet outgrown. Fancies, dreams, and superstitions by the hundred have been outgrown and cast aside. Many of the conceptions of the early ages have been sloughed off as too narrow for our modern life; but here is a belief that has in it a vitality that shows no signs of waning. It has a stronger grip upon the thought of the world to-day than it had a thousand years ago. A belief that survives through a hundred thousand years, passing through the storms and revolutions of the changing seasons — a belief which no fire can burn up, or dagger kill, is surely a belief that has in it the vitality of God's undying truth.

The belief in immortality grows with the development of life. The higher a man is in the scale of being, the wider the sweep of his thoughts and the truer his affections, the more likely he is to believe that the soul is immortal. Men who are bestial and live close to the earth are not certain that they will live after death. It is the great-minded, great-hearted men of the race who have been the surest of the life everlasting. There were thousands of men in Greece, who lived little better than brutes, who did not know whether or not their souls would survive death. But when we come up to the great Greeks — Socrates, Plato, Euripides — we are in the presence of men who know that the soul is immortal. There was many a Roman who lived in the slime and had no convictions in regard to his soul's future; but when we come to a great Roman like Cicero, we hear him asserting in the senate chamber that death does not destroy a man. Many a superficial and godless Frenchman has known nothing about immortality, nor cared anything about it; but when we rise to such men as Montesquieu and Victor Hugo, we are in the presence of men who know they will not die. Millions of Englishmen have lived and passed away without any steadfast hope of life beyond the grave; but when we sit down and talk with the great Englishmen of the centuries, — England's Shakespeares and Miltons and Gladstones, — we are assured that the soul is immortal. This, too, is significant then, that

a belief which was born in a cave in the age of ice should be most vital and mighty in the hearts of the supreme men of our civilization.

Not only does this belief grow, but it conquers. It works mightily upon the thoughts and affections of men. It braces man for new contests, it nerves him for great struggles, it fires him for vast enterprises, it enlarges his sympathies, it purifies his affections. Under the sway of this belief man becomes both taller and stronger. The more firmly men grasp the world that is coming, the more heroically do they struggle to make this world what it ought to be. A man is able to do hard things which draw the blood, and to persist in doing them to the end of the day if he knows that death is not the end. Men are steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, when fully convinced that their labor is not in vain in the Lord. History has lighted for us those four candles, and in their light it is safe to walk.

But philosophy has lighted candles also, and these burn no less brightly than those which we have just now considered. Not content with what lies upon the surface, the philosopher goes beneath appearances and studies out causes and relations. In his study of human nature he discovers certain facts, and from these facts he draws certain inferences. These facts we may say are candles.

Man has an instinctive yearning and longing for

immortality. If he does not have this, it is because he is not a normal man. It is an instinct which cannot be strangled without lasting injury to the heart. If a man does not believe in immortality, he will believe in something else far less credible. If he will not believe in personal immortality, he will believe in corporate immortality. That is, he will believe that he will continue to exist in the complex life of humanity. George Eliot was a trustful, noble, English Christian girl. At a critical period of her life she fell under the influence of a sceptical German professor, who took away from her her Christian faith. She gave up her belief in immortality. But she could not go without belief altogether, and so she accepted the teaching of a Frenchman who was endeavoring to persuade his countrymen that the only immortality for which a man may hope is the hope of having one's life merged in the general life of the race. This became George Eliot's belief. She gave expression to it in her pathetic poem: —

> "O may I join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence."

Under the influence of this belief the heart of George Eliot grew sad. There are others who go farther than she went, and who give up belief in immortality of every sort. In many cases these

persons grow hopeless and bitter. The pessimism which has played such large part in the literature of modern Russia, Germany, and France has proceeded from hearts in which the belief in immortality has been crushed. What is pessimism but a great column of black smoke proceeding from a heart in which the hope of immortality has been burned to ashes. If a man remains normal, if he allows the current of his feeling to flow in the channel appointed for it, he believes in immortality. What are we to infer from this? Tennyson has expressed the inference: —

> "Thou wilt not leave us in the dust,
> Thou madest man, he knows not why;
> He thinks he was not made to die;
> And thou hast made him, thou art just."

Man has affections. They are an inextricable part of his life. They are as worthy of attention as are his thoughts. Love is as reliable as reason. The heart has reasons which the reason cannot understand. Now it is impossible for love at its strongest to believe that death ends all. From that horrid thought it shrinks back with a cry of pain. Poets are the prophets of the heart, and all the great poets teach immortality. After Tennyson had lost his dearest friend, he pondered for months the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" He was familiar with the scientific and philosophic writings of his time, and all the doubts which had

been suggested by the writers of England and the continent passed in long processions through his mind. Sometimes he could hear a voice telling him to believe no more. But no sooner had he heard this voice than — to use his own language — his "heart stood up and answered, I have felt." Tennyson came out with the conviction that Arthur Hallam was still alive — his heart convinced him of it. That is the revelation given to us by all the poets. John Greenleaf Whittier, in "Snow Bound," speaks thus: —

> "Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust
> (Since he who knows our need is just),
> That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.
> Alas for him who never sees
> The stars shine through his cypress trees!
> Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
> Nor looks to see the breaking day
> Across the mournful marbles play;
> Who hath not learned in hours of faith
> The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
> That Life is ever lord of Death,
> And Love can never lose its own."

Ralph Waldo Emerson was a great thinker. He sometimes threw beliefs out of the door of his mind which came in through the window of his heart. Standing beside the grave of his little boy, he ponders the old problem, "If a man die, shall he live again?" and there, with his boy's grave at his feet and God's sky above his head, he says: —

"What is excellent,
As God lives, is permanent;
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;
Hearts' love will meet thee again.
Revere the Maker; fetch thine eye
Up to his style, and manners of the sky."

The heart is a great teacher of immortality. If God made the heart, will the heart perpetually deceive us?

A man has a mind, and his mind is too large for this world. There is no scope for the employment or satisfaction of all his powers. He is too great to be crowded within the narrow limits of seventy paltry years. We have in us latent powers for whose development we find here no opportunity. Our life at its best is fragmentary and unsatisfactory. As Emerson says, "God does not build magnificently for mice." Nor can we believe that God would build the human mind for the fleeting day of earthly life. The mind is never satisfied. It never knows enough. Those who know the most are hungriest for knowledge. Goethe had one of the greatest minds God ever intrusted to a mortal. He filled with industry a long life, and spent a great fortune upon the furnishing of his mind; but when he lay down to die, at the age of eighty-three, he died with these words upon his lips, "Light, light, more light!"

A man is never able to do in this world what he wants to do. We all lay down our work before it

is half completed. Victor Hugo, on his seventieth birthday, said: "Winter is on my head, and eternal spring is in my heart. The nearer I approach the end, the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds which invite me. It is marvellous, yet simple. It is a fairy tale, and it is a history. For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose, verse, history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, song — I have tried all. But I feel that I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me." His language is the language of all great workers in the realm of character building. Who could have peace, if he felt that this life is all? If we are intended to grow into the image of God, we must have another life in which to do it; we can make only the beginnings here. Before we have chiselled out the statue, the chisel falls from our hand. The portrait which we paint is nothing but a charcoal sketch when the doctor tells us that we must die. The temple which we begin to build has not its foundations completed before the undertaker is at the door. We are made upon too great a scale for such a world as this, and there is down deep in us a quenchless desire for a fuller expression of our powers. "'Tis life of which our nerves are scant, more life and fuller that we want."

The world is incomplete. Everything is unfinished here. None of the processes is worked out. The world is inexplicable without another world.

What inequalities! What wrongs! What abominations! What injustices! How many wicked men who are not punished! How many good men are not sufficiently rewarded! Right is on the scaffold, wrong is on the throne, and there is no explanation for this world unless within the shadow there is a world in which wrong shall be righted and justice be done. This world is unendurable unless there is another. The whole world is groaning and travailing in pain: what does it all mean? These tragedies — can we endure them? These enigmas — how shall we bear them? The world is filled with things that are dismal and dark; but pull aside the curtain, and when the light from another world falls on this one all our pains and troubles flash like jewels in the sun. The conscience in man stands up and says: The Judge of all the world must do right. How can he do right with all his creatures unless he has more time?

Science has also lighted certain candles in whose light to-day many men are walking. One of the most stupendous discoveries of the nineteenth century is the discovery of the fact that matter cannot be destroyed. You can change its form, but not its weight. You may alter its shape, but not its substance. It cannot be washed away or burned up or blotted out. Nor is it possible, says science, to destroy energy. Force may be transformed, but not obliterated. Science has added to her creed

the doctrine of the conservation of energy. If it be true, then, that force cannot be destroyed, we are allowed to hope that that peculiar form of force known as personality will survive the experience of death. If what we call the natural forces of the world cannot be annihilated, why should we not expect that affections and aspirations and the power of thinking should be equally indestructible?

Science has taught us that there is such a thing as the survival of the fittest. In her study of the processes by which the world has climbed to its present level, she has discovered that certain organisms find themselves unequal to the race of life and fall away, while other organisms persist and conquer. The weak and the unfit perish; the strong survive. Now of all the beliefs which have gone to make up man's spiritual possessions, not one has shown a greater degree of vitality and a greater power to resist the disintegrating influences of all changes in environment than belief in the soul's immortality. Many a fancy and many a notion has been sloughed off and cast as rubbish to the void, but the conviction that if a man die he shall live again has persisted in spite of all opposing forces; and the very fact that after so long a lapse of time it is still vigorous and buoyant, suggests that this is a belief which is fit to live. Evidently it is one of the things which the Creator of the universe desires to grow. If the Creator of the universe is good, it is difficult to

believe that belief in immortality is a delusion. The mind revolts from the idea that a lie is fit.

Science has also familiarized us with the fact that progress is only possible by the constant adaptation of faculty to environment. Without light there would be no eye. Without sound vibrations there would be no ear. Without water there would be no fin. Without air there would be no wing. Whenever we find a faculty, we discover in the environment something to which that faculty responds. There is always a correspondence between the internal life and the external reality. This is true throughout the entire animal creation up to man. In man we find things which do not exist in animals below his rank. There is in him the thought of immortality, and the craving for it, and the expanding conviction of it. The question now arises, Is there any external reality to which this internal hope corresponds? Among animals progress is conditioned on the adjustment of faculty to environment. How is it with progress among men? As man rises in the scale of being his expectation of life eternal becomes increasingly strong. Does this internal condition correspond to any unseen reality? If not, then one-half the universe is made on one plan and the other half is made on a different plan: there is adaptation of faculty to environment among animals and no such adaptation among men.

Science has persuaded us all to believe in prog-

ress. It is her constant contention that through the ages there runs an unfolding purpose. She has pointed out the fact that everything passes from lower to higher, from less to more, from simple to more complex. And having gotten us into this forward looking habit, it is well-nigh impossible for us to bound our vision with the tomb. With the apostle we cry out, "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Conservation of energy, the survival of the fittest, the adaptation of faculty to environment, the principle of progression, — these are the four candles which science has lighted for the comfort and strengthening of men.

Thus far we have spoken of candles only. Let us now think of the sun. These candles would all be burning even though there were no Jesus Christ. But on Easter Sunday we can dispense with the candles and revel in the full light of the risen sun. Immortality has always been believed in and always hoped for; but it was Jesus of Nazareth who brought life and immortality to light. Jesus never argued with men concerning life beyond the grave, he took it for granted. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living — that to him was axiomatic. In the presence of death he spoke with accents that never wavered. If you want to see the difference between philosophy and revelation, compare the

Phædo of Plato with the fourteenth chapter of the gospel of St. John. Socrates, sitting on the side of the bed in his prison cell in Athens, indulges in long and abstruse arguments to prove to his disciples that the soul will not cease to live at death. Listen to Jesus saying: "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." From first to last he always spoke in the tone which he used in the conversation with Nicodemus, "We speak that we do know, we testify that we have seen." But his words were no less wonderful than his deeds. He confirmed the truth of all which he had said by his rising from the grave. He told his disciples that on the third day he would rise, and so he did.

No event of history is more certain than that. For no event can stronger evidence be brought than can be brought for that. It has evidence of many kinds, and evidence which cannot be overturned. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, sums it all up in a paragraph as compact as it is convincing. Paul assures the Corinthians that he has preached to them only that which he has received. He has had long talks with Peter and with John, and he knows just what has happened. He says that Christ appeared first of all to Peter, and later on he appeared to the Twelve, and still later to five hundred brethren at once, of whom over two hun-

dred and fifty were living when the apostle wrote his letter. This was an immortal company; they had had an experience which had been given to no others. Furthermore, he appeared to James, the man who had not believed in him, but who is now a believer and the head of the Jerusalem church. He appeared again to the Twelve, the official company which is the head of the church universal. "And last of all," says Paul, "he appeared to me." Thus far he has dealt with hearsay, he has been willing to stand upon the testimony of others; but now he enters the realm of personal experience. Nothing can shake him from his position; nothing can overturn the foundation on which he stands. The very idea that Christ has not risen is to his mind inconceivable, horrible, crushing. His language even yet burns after the winters of nineteen hundred years. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ." What terrible consequences follow the denial of the resurrection, — the apostles are liars, and all Christians are dupes, all preaching and all faith are vain. No wonder the apostle goes on to say, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable." The supposition that Christ has not risen is picked up only to be hurled away.

But a page of one of St. Paul's letters is not

the only foundation on which we build. We have something more substantial than one man's conviction for a foundation. How does it happen that the day of rest has been for centuries on the first day of the week? For centuries it had been on the last day. But suddenly the first day of the week has a glory which no other day possesses. When Saul of Tarsus, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, begins to instruct his converts in regard to what they are to do on the first day of the week, certainly something has happened to bring about so mighty a revolution. So great a change must have been wrought by some phenomenal event. And what does it mean that there is one Sunday of the year more glorious than all the others—a Sunday that walks like a jewelled queen in the midst of her sister Sundays? Something wonderful must have happened on an April Sunday in Palestine that at the distance of nineteen hundred years our Easter Sunday should still be glorious. The resurrection of Jesus left its mark not only in the apostolic writings, but in the world's calendar. You may burn up the New Testament, but what will you do with the calendar?

Not only has the calendar been changed, but the institutional life of man has undergone a marvellous transformation. After the death of Jesus his disciples were discouraged and defeated. They were a company of nerveless, timid, cowering men. There was no song on their lips, nor any light in

their faces, nor any fire in their voices; and yet after a few days these men, for some reason, became bold as lions, and fairly sprang upon the world. They were eloquent as archangels entrancing men's hearts. They were mighty as Titans, and turned the world upside down. How are we going to account for a transformation so marvellous? These eleven men, filled with a burning conviction that Jesus had risen, began to organize men around themselves. In a short time the number was a thousand, and then it became ten thousand, and then ten hundred thousand, then ten millions, and then a hundred millions, and then two hundred millions, and then three hundred millions, then four hundred millions! The marvellous process has gone on steadily to the present hour, until it requires no great stretch of faith to believe that those eleven men will some day succeed in winding the entire race around themselves into one compact body of believing men, each one joining in the glad confession, "Now is Christ risen!" The Christian church is built upon the fact that Jesus rose from the grave. On Easter Sunday we stand upon that luminous and sovereign fact and call upon all men everywhere to join us in the exultant shout: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

XIII

THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." — Acts ii : 38.

HAVING considered the nature of faith and the place of reason, and having glanced at some of the problems which the forces of the modern world have created, and having considered in a hurried manner the general scope and characteristics of the Scriptures, the person of Jesus and his mighty deeds, the forgiveness of sin and the punishment of it, the Christian church and the life everlasting, we are now ready to take up the doctrine which may be said to be the crown of the teaching of the Christian religion, the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Probably some of you felt that the climax of our thought was reached on Easter Sunday. It seemed that the course of sermons reached in our Easter meditation its appropriate conclusion. Why was not that a good point at which to stop? Is not Easter the great Sunday of the year? Does it not move among its sister Sundays like a jewelled and garlanded queen? And is not the resurrection

of Jesus the foundation fact on which the Christian church has been built? And is not the immortality of the soul the most august theme of which the mind can think? I do not wonder that some of you felt that with the Easter message our study of the fundamentals of the Christian religion might appropriately come to an end. But the New Testament will not let us stop there. All which we have thus far studied is only a fragment of the Christian religion, and it is a fragment which would not have perennial significance if there was nothing to complete it. He errs greatly who thinks that the Christian religion stops with the resurrection.

There was a time when the disciples supposed that it stopped there. When Jesus passed into the cloud which received him from human sight, his disciples stood rooted to the ground gazing steadfastly into the heavens into which their Master had gone. And while they stood there they received this reprimand from two men robed in white, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken from you into heaven shall come again." It was not until they returned to the city that they received the completion of the revelation which had been promised them. It is not the object of the Christian religion to leave men standing gazing into heaven. The New Testament will not permit it. Visions are entrancing, but they are not the thing which is supreme. When Jesus was praying

one day high up on a mountain in the presence of his disciples, he was transfigured before them. The eyes of his disciples were opened so that they could see into the world eternal where they beheld the forms of Elijah and Moses. Enraptured by the sight, Peter said: "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles: one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But the Master paid no attention to his request; he led his disciples straightway from the mountain top down to the plain where there was a father in distress and a child sick and a discouraged company of workers brooding over a humiliating defeat. The Christian religion will not allow us to stand gazing into heaven, nor will it allow us to build our habitation upon a shining mountain top; it persists in thrusting us down upon the dusty plain where problems are pressing and burdens are hard to bear.

If that was the method of Jesus, it was also the method of Paul. Certainly no man ever read more meaning into the resurrection of Jesus than did the apostle to the Gentiles. Wherever he went, he preached Jesus and the resurrection. To him the resurrection was fundamental, without it the Christian religion was built on sand. But he never permitted himself to stop with the resurrection. In his great argument in his first letter to the Corinthians he rises from peak to peak, climbing grandly up the mountain of his argument until at

last with sure feet planted, as we think, upon the very summit, he gives forth that exultant shout which has rung like music in the world's atmosphere through nineteen centuries: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And in the presence of the grim monster which has trampled beneath his pitiless feet countless generations of human beings, this inspired prophet of the Lord cries, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." O Paul, that is a good place to stop. You have reached the climax. It is impossible to go beyond that. Pronounce the benediction and let us go. But, no, listen, he is going higher. His message is not completed. "Now, concerning the collection." What collection? The collection for the poor people in Jerusalem. Who are they? Jews. To whom is Paul writing? Gentiles. Shall Gentiles give their money to Jerusalem Jews? Ah, Paul, you forget the prejudices and hatreds of a thousand years — do you expect money to go from Corinth to Jerusalem? Why should Gentiles make sacrifices for Jews? Paul has his answer, It is because we are the immortal sons of God destined to live with him forever, and therefore while we are here upon the earth we must live as brothers, bearing one another's burdens, ministering to one another in the Lord.

You have never the complete Christian message until you reach the great word "service." Chris-

tianity is not a vision or a thought or a dream; it is action, conduct, life. The goal of the Christian faith is not theoretical knowledge, but practical power. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, but you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me." In that sentence Jesus strikes the keynote of all his teaching. He always placed doing before knowing, and action before information, deeds before visions or notions. Listen to him in the Sermon on the Mount saying, "Not every one that *says* . . . many shall *say*." How he scorned the hollow words of the lips! The Sermon on the Mount is filled with great principles; but you have forgotten the climax of the sermon if you forget that it says this, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them is a wise man; whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not is a fool." That is the tone of Jesus' teaching from first to last. On the very last night of his life he is speaking with the same accent and the same emphasis. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."

We are to be judged here and everywhere by what we do. Those that have done good are going to come forth to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil are going to come forth to the resurrection of condemnation. In this world hypocrisies and shams and self-confusions and deceits

are numerous and easy, but before the judgment bar we all shall see things as they are. There will be no escape from the awful sentence: "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these my brethren ye did it not unto me. Depart."

The end of life, then, according to Jesus, is not a thought, but an action. The supreme thing is not information, but conduct. The most urgent and critical question which you and I have to face is not any question of biblical criticism or Christian philosophy, but can a man on Manhattan Island in the first decade of the twentieth century live the Christ life? and can a man here and now do the work which God would have him do? All other questions sink into insignificance compared with this one. Oh, Christian religion, what do you have to say? Is it possible for a man at all times and in all circumstances to live a life which shall be well pleasing to God? But before the question has left our lips, the Christian religion throws back the full-toned, jubilant answer, "Yes." And if we ask, How is this great thing possible? she immediately replies, "By the power of the Holy Spirit."

We are dealing, then, this morning with one of the most practical of all subjects, and yet it is a subject enveloped in the greatest mystery. There is no article in the Christian creed which it is more difficult to deal with, and concerning which more perplexing and unanswerable questions rise than just that little article which we repeat so easily,

and I fear so thoughtlessly, "I believe in the Holy Spirit." Whenever we begin to think about this subject, we enter the realm of mystery, and Jesus acknowledged all this in his conversation with Nicodemus. Before he talked long with the aged citizen of Jerusalem, Nicodemus began to use the great adverb "how," a word which springs spontaneously to the lips of every man who thinks. And Jesus at once informed him that there was no answer to his question. Certain things *are* simply because they *are*. They are not to be philosophized about until they have been acted on. A man must be born of the Spirit. If you ask the question How? the answer is, He must be born of the Spirit. If you say it is a mystery, the answer is, You speak truly, but the world is full of mystery. Even such a common thing as the wind is a mystery. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

If you ask how does the Holy Spirit work upon the human mind, no satisfactory answer can be given. That is the great question which is constantly coming up to meet us out of the Scriptures, How did the Spirit of God act upon the minds of the men who wrote the books which have been bound up into this great volume which we call the Bible? You say these men were inspired. What is inspiration? Can it be defined? No. The

Christian church has never in all her history dared to write down a definition of inspiration. Individuals have been trying to do it and their attempts can be numbered by the thousands; but not a single definition yet framed has met with universal approbation. Even the Roman Catholic church, the church which is exceedingly bold in writing down the things which must be accepted, has never yet ventured upon the hazardous task of formulating a definition of inspiration.

There are at least three different theories entertained by Catholic theologians, and none of the theories has been officially accepted or condemned by the Bishop of Rome. And what is true of Catholicism is equally true of Protestantism. Different men have different conceptions of what is involved in inspiration; but no Protestant church has ever yet attempted to give a definition of it to which all her members must subscribe. We are all willing to say with Paul that every Scripture inspired of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; and we all say with Peter that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. But in what way was the Holy Spirit operative? and how far did the moving impulse of the Holy Spirit extend? and how much of the bias and the limitation of the individual was carried into the substance of the message?

These are the problems upon which Christian

thinkers have never yet been able to agree. We believe that somehow the Eternal Spirit worked upon the minds of the prophets and apostles; but how this was done we cannot say. Our own Christian life involves a mystery which baffles us. When does the Holy Spirit come to us? Many a Christian has asked that question in great distress. One man says: "He has come to me. I know the hour, the very minute when he entered into my soul. My heart burned within me, old things passed away, and lo! all things became new." The man who stands by his side listening to this testimony says to himself: "This experience has never yet been mine. I think I have the Spirit; but yet I know not when he came. I cannot point out any shining hour in all the calendar of my life in which the king of glory entered."

Men are not only perplexed in regard to the coming of the Spirit, but they are not able to tell how the Spirit works. How mysterious the whole problem is! This Holy Spirit is in us working in us to do God's good pleasure; but yet how much of our life is due to him, and how much is really ours? These motives by which we are moved, how many of them come from heaven, and how many of them come from the earth? These impulses that drive us in a certain direction, how many of them are the creation of the Spirit, and how many of them are the creation of our own flesh? How can any man tell how fully God has taken possession of his life?

All this is a great mystery; but it is the same sort of mystery which we face every time we think about the action of the mind upon the body. How does the human spirit act upon the body? Nobody knows. Science has no lancet, no microscope, no X-rays, with which to reach to the roots of that deep mystery. Science has within a century found out a thousand different things, but when it comes to stating how the mind acts upon the body, the most learned scientist of the twentieth century is as ignorant as was the primeval man who built his hut amid the melting icebergs in the age of ice. And how does one mind influence another mind? We speak familiarly of influence — we influence others and are in turn influenced by them; but what is this something which we call influence? and how can one mind be moulded and turned by another? If we cannot answer a question like this, why should we be surprised that we cannot follow the processes of God's activity when he is at work in the heart of man? If we cannot explain the action of the human mind, much less may we hope to be able to explain the mind of God.

But while we move amid great mysteries there are certain things clear as the sun at noon. In this matter as in all others, God gives us all the light we need. He does not answer all the questions we may choose to ask; but he gives us light by which it is possible for us to walk. He tells us it is not for us to know the times and seasons, but

assures us that we shall receive power. The Christian religion makes the declaration positive and unmistakable that there is such a person as the Holy Spirit. He is as real and as personal and as mighty as Christ is, as God the Father is. He assisted Jesus in all his earthly work. John the Baptist in comparing the Messiah with himself declared that whereas he, the Baptist, could baptize with water, the Messiah should baptize with fire and with the Holy Spirit. In the training of the Twelve, Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit repeatedly; but it is not until the very close of his earthly life that he declares fully what has been in his heart. He has had many things to say to these twelve men, but they have not been able to bear them until the shadows are so thick around them that their hearts are receptive to this high spiritual teaching.

St. John in his gospel tells the gist of the conversation on that never-to-be-forgotten night. According to John, the great subject was the Holy Spirit. It was an awful evening, and yet it was a glorious evening, because all the room was lighted up by one splendid promise, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter." The word "comforter" is not a good translation of the Greek. Comforter in our language means soother. Jesus is not talking about a soother; he is talking about an advocate, a protector, a defender, a friend in need. He himself

has been all this to these twelve men. He has stood by them, protecting them from the assaults of their enemies, answering the perplexing questions which have been asked, solving the intricate problems which have been presented, throwing light upon the path when it was dark, discomfiting plotting Scribes and Pharisees by a wisdom which was divine. And now their protector and friend is going away, and these twelve men look at him out of hopeless eyes.

Their memories are treacherous, and they fear that they may forget the golden words which he has spoken; but he assures them that there is no danger of this because the Holy Spirit will call to their remembrance everything which he has told them. They realize their ignorance, they are only poor, bewildered fishermen and peasants; what are they to do in a world ruled by Rabbis seated on their thrones, and how are they to find out what is the truth in a world so filled with conflicting voices and delusions? But he takes away their fear by saying, "The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth."

Their hearts sink within them when they think about their weakness. In imagination the great bold world rises before them, bitter, stubborn, unconquerable. How can these men make the slightest impression upon the mind of their age? What can they hope to do either with the scholars or with the crowd? Is not the whole world hos-

tile to the teaching which Jesus has given? And how will it be possible for men so weak as they are to bear the burden which the Master is rolling on them? But here again Jesus assures them that their work is not hopeless because the Holy Spirit will go before them and prepare the way; Jesus' departure instead of weakening them will really give them added strength. "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go away, I will send him to you. And he, when he is come, will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment."

An unutterable sense of loneliness fills their hearts when they think of the desolate days which lie ahead of them. He has been their companion, comrade, friend — and he is going away. They cannot follow him, they must stay and labor and suffer and struggle. All the future is midnight to their disconsolate eyes. But here again Jesus comes to the rescue saying: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever. He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

This is the great promise which the Christian religion makes to men. When Simon Peter on the day of Pentecost declared to the assembled crowd the reward which God offered to all who became the disciples of his Son, he spoke thus: "Repent,

and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Was the promise of Jesus kept? It was. How do we know it? The Christian church proves it. Had there been no Pentecost, there would have been no Christian church. Men sometimes say that there are two great days in the Christian year, — Christmas and Easter, — the day that commemorates the birth of Jesus, and the day that commemorates his rising from the tomb. Those are great days, to be sure; but they do not exhaust the list, there is another day as great as either, and without which the first two would amount to little. There are three great days in the Christian year: Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday, and we are not true to our faith when we allow Whitsunday to fall into the background. Whitsunday, the seventh Sunday after Easter, was called Whitsunday or White Sunday, because for centuries professing Christians dressed in white on that great day to commemorate the coming of the Holy Spirit. If you have neglected Whitsunday and given it a subordinate place in your mind and heart, crown it at once and keep it on its throne. It has equal rank with Christmas and Easter. The three together are the three throned days of the Christian year.

It was Pentecost that made the Christian church possible. Neither Christmas nor Easter would have any glory if it were not for Whitsunday. Had

the Holy Spirit never come, the Christian church would never have conquered, — nay, the Christian church would never have been born. We are always giving a fictitious value to knowledge. In our ignorance we sometimes imagine that the Christian religion owes its power to a certain set of ideas. We speak of the Golden Rule, and the Beatitudes, and the Lord's Prayer, and the Fatherhood of God as though these were mighty forces which would account for Christian growth and progress. But when we study history, we discover that ideas are comparatively impotent in the great work of changing the character of the human heart.

If great ideas are sufficient to make men Christians, how does it happen that the disciples were so joyless and so impotent until the day of Pentecost? On the very last night of Jesus' earthly life we see them quarrelling in taking their places at the little table in the upper room. John seized a place on one side of the Master, and Judas a place on the other, and the result was that Matthew and Bartholomew and the rest of them were nettled. There was so much ugliness in their hearts that it was impossible to proceed with the feast. And yet these men had listened to all the lovely teaching of Jesus concerning brotherly love, and forbearance, and longsuffering, and humility. Again and again they had been taught that they must find greatness in their willingness to serve one another. What does knowledge amount to if there is an evil spirit

in the heart? And think what Peter did still later on that awful night. He lied not simply once, but twice and thrice, and covered his last lie with an oath. Simon Peter had heard the Sermon on the Mount, and had been taught the Lord's Prayer from the lips of the Lord himself, and had heard all the parables, and had seen all the miracles, and had been present on the Mount of Transfiguration, and had drunk in all the teaching of the upper room — and yet this man, with all this knowledge, lies and swears!

Ideas will never save a man. Nor did the resurrection change the disposition or temper of these men. Even after the resurrection they were timid. They hid themselves away in a room, locked the doors and bolted them. Every creak alarmed them, every footfall made them afraid, joy is a stranger to their hearts, courage they have not yet learned. But on the day of Pentecost something happens. Somebody comes. The Holy Spirit baptizes them with a new power. Instantly the doors are thrown open, and Simon Peter stands up in the presence of a great crowd defending himself and the men who stand behind him, and explaining the cause of their tumultuous joy.

What has wrought this wondrous change? This man who lied will never lie again, this man who defiled his lips with an oath will never swear again. This man who has been weak as water is now at last, even as the Master promised — rock. Peter's

explanation is that the Holy Spirit has come. The day which the prophets longed for, and which one of the keenest-eyed of them foresaw, has at last arrived. Christ's promise has been kept. Although wicked men have crucified him, he has ascended to the right hand of God, and a new Spirit has descended into the hearts of men. The history of the Christian church then begins with the day of Pentecost. There is no church without fire and power, there is neither fire nor power without the Holy Spirit.

It is only by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that the Christian life becomes possible to any one of us. We are not made Christians by ideas, but by the Spirit who dwells within us. It is amazing how little our knowledge amounts to in curbing our propensities or in strengthening us for noble deeds. Have you ever compared your knowledge with your conduct? What a contrast! Your knowledge is a mountain, your conduct is a mole hill. Think of our advantages. Most of us were born in Christian families, we were rocked when children to the music of Christian hymns, we were loved and caressed and taught by Christian teachers. All our life long we have been bathed in the influences of the Christian church, listening to its sermons and hymns and prayers. We have had the support and the encouragement of Christian acquaintances and friends, the inspiration and instruction of Christian books. And yet how easy it is sometimes for us to

think and feel and say unchristian things. There are days when it seems as if the Holy Spirit leaves us, and the evil spirit enters in; and so long as the evil spirit has dominion over us all our good knowledge amounts to nothing. It lies unused in one corner of the soul. We, like Simon Peter and the other apostles, are hopeless until the Holy Spirit comes.

Ever since the day of Pentecost the Christian church has been living under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. The book of the Acts is the first volume of church history ever published, and if you will glance its pages through, you will see that the world in which you are living is different from that which is pictured for us in the gospels. In each of the gospels Jesus is supreme, he is everywhere. He is teacher, guide, king; but in the book of the Acts Jesus sinks into the background. His place is taken by the other comforter whom the Father has sent into the world. Simon Peter, looking into the face of the first liar who has been discovered in the Jerusalem church, says, "Ananias, why has Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" He does not say, God the Father, or Jesus; he says, Holy Spirit, because it is in the power of the Holy Spirit that the church is living its life, and doing its work. Stephen, in his great defence before the crowd which is thirsting for his blood, cries out at the close of his address, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit."

When the work of the church expands to the point where other officials are demanded, the apostles give directions that men should be chosen who are full of the Holy Spirit. That is the one prime qualification for office-bearing in the Christian church. Neither pastor, nor deacon, nor Sunday-school teacher is fit to hold a place in the church of God unless he has received the baptism. It is the Holy Spirit who distributes gifts among men, and it is he who gives men position in the church. Paul in saying good-by to the Ephesian elders says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers." And throughout the book of the Acts we see the church being guided by the Holy Spirit. Peter has in him all the conservatism and the prejudices of the Hebrew nation. He is willing that the Gentiles shall become Christians, but he feels that they ought first to become Jews. One day he has a dream, and from this dream he is aroused by the knocking of three men at the door. While he sits bewildered, wondering what he ought to do, the Spirit says to the hesitating apostle: "Behold, three men seek thee. Arise and go, for I have sent them." Obedient to the instructions, Peter goes to Cæsarea, sees the devout centurion of the Italian band, preaches to him and his companions, and even while he speaks the Holy Spirit falls on all of them who hear the word.

The Christian church took its first great step forward under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. In the course of time it was necessary for the church to move out from Asia into Europe, and here again the Holy Spirit is leader. The church at Antioch, filled with enthusiasm, dreamed of carrying the Christian message into regions whither it had not yet gone. And while the leaders of the church were fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Separate me, Barnabas, and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Paul always felt in all his labors that he was being directed by the Holy Spirit. If he was not permitted to enter into a certain province to preach there, it was because he was forbidden by the Holy Spirit. If other doors were open, it was because the Holy Spirit was inviting him to pass that way. The entire New Testament outside of the gospels unites in saying, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." The church of Jesus Christ is under the guidance and in the keeping and under the instruction of the Holy Spirit.

This is a truth, however, which we oftentimes forget. We have a fatal tendency to look backward. Looking backward is one of our most dangerous and debilitating sins. Men sometimes say: "Oh, for the days of Whitefield! Oh, for the days of Wesley! Oh, for the days of Luther! Oh, for the days of the apostles!" What we ought to say is: Oh, for the belief that the same Jesus who

ascended into the heavens has come back again, and that he is here in his invisible representative, the Holy Spirit, as truly as he was in the city of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost! In one of Paul's missionary journeys he came to Ephesus, where he found certain disciples. They seemed to be good men, but before Paul had been with them long he observed that they lacked something. "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" he said, and the reply was: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit." The descendants of these Ephesian disciples are to be found in all parts of our modern Christendom. There are men who have a sincere admiration for Jesus, taking a genuine delight in the study of his life, endeavoring in every possible way to master the geography and the customs of his times, who lose out of the Christian religion its joy and power because they have never grasped the truth that Christ is living, and that he reigns to-day in the hearts of men through the power of the Holy Spirit.

What doctrine is more needed in our time than just the doctrine which is the subject of our study this morning? We are living in an age characterized by mighty changes. Old conceptions are passing away, in medicine, in political economy, in philosophy, in every department of human thought. Some of the conceptions of the old theology are disappearing. Some of the old conceptions of the

Scriptures are passing. And many Christians are distressed. It is no light matter for a man to surrender something which has been a part of his intellectual life for years, and the experience becomes all the more distressing if the thing to be parted with has been involved in his own spiritual development.

Have you ever pictured to yourselves the consternation and dismay of the poor Hebrews of the first century who were asked to embrace the Christian faith? There is one entire book in the New Testament which is from first to last a book of consolation written for the relief of men who found their ancient beliefs gradually slipping from their grasp. The Hebrews had for centuries been trained to reverence the entire temple, its worship, its architecture, its altar, its candlesticks, its bleeding victims, its prayers, its fasts. Every feature of the whole system had special significance and sanctity. And when the apostle stepped in announcing that all this had been done away with, many a sincere heart was filled with anguish unutterable. And the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews takes up the difficult task of showing these perplexed and sorrow-stricken people that while many of their old conceptions would have to be surrendered, yet nothing that was really vital and essential would ever pass away. Things that were shaken would inevitably pass away in order that the things which cannot be shaken might remain.

So it is in our day. There are men and women who are distressed because they are neither able to hold the old conceptions as they once held them, nor are they able to accept the new. What shall such people do? Believe in the Holy Spirit. If men undermine your confidence in one set of interpretations and conceptions, throw yourself back on God. However the opinions of men may change, God never changes. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Bewildered as you may be by the thousand conflicting voices which to-day fill the air with din, believe in the Spirit of Truth, give yourself up to him, and he will guide you into all the truth which it is needful for you to know.

And what a work we have to do! The world has always been materialistic and sordid, and such it is to-day. There is widespread corruption in society, in politics, in the church. Well might a man be despondent and hopeless if he could not say: "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Holiness, who is able to cleanse as with fire." They tell us there are many dangers just ahead of us. Many men are timid. Some of them are almost in hysterics. Writers tell us of the Yellow peril, and the Slavic peril, and the Black peril, and if one should listen to what all the croaking prophets are saying, life would be dark indeed. There are those who tell us of awful things which are sure to overtake us before another generation has lived

out its life. Certain men in the financial world have gotten such enormous wealth into their control that they have the world practically at their mercy. How their sovereignty can be curbed or broken, no one is able to say. And there are other men, representatives of labor, who are slowly but surely gathering into their hands power as great as that possessed by the kings of gold. And when the giants of capital and the giants of labor meet at last, as meet they must, there will be a conflict such as the world has never yet seen. So men are saying. If a man should fix his eyes steadfastly upon certain tendencies, if he should listen to nothing but the voices of greed and of hate, well might he despair of his country, well might he lose hope for the future. But let a man say, "I believe in the Holy Spirit," and none of these things will move him.

Why should any man be despondent who believes that the Spirit of God is working on the hearts of men? He has access to the hearts of the money kings and to the hearts of the labor kings. He has access to the hearts of the good and to the hearts of the bad, to the hearts of the strong and to the hearts of the weak. Believing in his sovereign power, let us work in the present with a song in our hearts, and let us face the future with a courage undaunted. "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world."

According to the Christian religion the Holy

Spirit is a gift. A gift is worthless unless it is accepted. How can we accept this offered gift? That is a vital question. How can we secure this promised strengthener? The answer is, By prayer. The Master says, "Ask, seek, knock." Those who ask receive, those who seek find, to them who knock it is opened. "If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." There must be perseverance in prayer; a man must pray always and not faint. He must wait on the Lord. In a feverish and impatient age we need to refresh our memory by reading again the things which are promised to those who are willing to wait. A prayer is not availing unless it is offered in the name of Jesus. This being interpreted means the spirit of Jesus.

It is only when we pray as he prayed that we can be sure of acceptance with God. He prayed with submission. He surrendered himself completely. He emptied himself, abandoning his own wishes and desires, throwing himself entirely upon the Father. And so must we. The first word of Peter's message to us is Repent. We must cast away our sin. We must give ourselves completely to God. And in our praying we must consecrate ourselves to his service. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." So the Master said, and so must say all his disciples.

And the prayer must be the prayer of faith. The thing for whose performance we ask for sufficient strength must be attempted forthwith, and with exultant confidence. Whatsoever the Master says, we must do. Even if he commands us what is apparently impossible, we must nevertheless attempt it. If he says, "Give ye the multitude to eat," and we have nothing more than five barley loaves and two small fishes, we must at once proceed to carry out his commandment. Would you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, then desire that in you the Father's promise may be at once fulfilled. Begin to live a nobler life to-day. Begin to pray as you have never prayed before. To-day give yourself up with a submission more complete, and begin to dream larger things which it is possible for you to do for the Christian church. Repent, and be baptized into the name of Jesus, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

"Receive ye the gift of the Holy Spirit." This is the goal toward which we have been moving from the beginning. This is the climax of all gospel preaching. Every preacher when he is at his highest repeats the words of Simon Peter on the day of Pentecost, "Be baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." My purpose has not been to furnish you with new ideas and interpretations which you might criticise, compare one with the other, or discuss. All the preaching has been in vain unless

some soul has been led to cry out, "O Lord God Almighty, give me the illumination and power and joy of the Holy Spirit."

It is not enough for ministers to instruct men in regard to their duty. A man may know his duty and still not do it. He certainly will not do it unless he has received the Holy Spirit. Jesus did not do the things which the evangelists report that he did because it was his duty to do them. He did not turn his back on Nazareth and heal and work and teach and suffer and bleed and die because by careful thinking he had come to the conclusion that it was his duty to do all this. Jesus did what he did because the Spirit descended upon him and abode upon him. The Strengthener was given unto him without measure. The church is always impotent if composed of men who do only what they think they ought to do. As well might I say to Cleopatra's Needle, "O ancient obelisk, step down from off your granite pedestal, and do the thing which I command you!" expecting it to heed my word, as to say to New York men, Do this duty or that, expecting them to do it, unless God has first baptized them with the Holy Spirit. It is not until God is in a man that a man is ready to do what God would have him do.

We are not truly Christians, then, unless we have the Holy Spirit. The Christian life must be different from all other life. If a Christian man is not different from a man who is not a Christian,

then his Christianity is spurious and a sham. A man who is baptized into the Spirit of the Lord has a tone to his life, and carries an atmosphere with him which compel men to say: That man is a Christian. Without the Holy Spirit it is impossible to do any of the great things which the New Testament wants done. "No man," says Paul, "can say that Christ is Lord except in the Holy Spirit." Nor is it possible for men to pray unless assisted by this same Holy Spirit. Nor is it possible for us to bear witness to the power and goodness of Christ unless we have tarried in Jerusalem until Pentecost has come. It is in the power of the Holy Spirit that we come off more than conquerors. It is only when we have received the other Strengthener that we are able to love and keep on loving, to work and keep on working, to hope and keep on hoping to the end of the day.

Have you received the gift of the Holy Spirit? If not, then let me exhort you in the words of Peter, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you into the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

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